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SINGER'S HEART



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A SINGER'S HEART

A SINGER'S HEART

BY

ANNA FARQUHAR



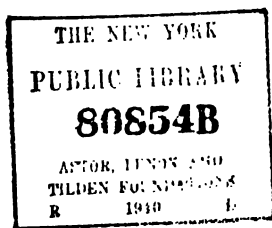
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DEDICATED
TO
THE ART OF SINGING.

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*" I turned me to the side
Whence came the voice,
And there appeared to me a light
Which shone bright as a star :
My own soul it was."*

A Singer's Heart

CHAPTER I

WITHOUT disputing that in all probability Providence does shape our ends, we may be permitted to doubt that the Supreme Modeller's design is to chip down the elements of character with which we are born into altogether new shapes.

No, a man of sixty can remember the emotions of the age of six and sixteen, recognizing them as still a part of his being, only changed to fit the circumstances of maturity, and perhaps responding more readily to the curb-bit of experience.

Any one having known Eleonora Dean from her cradle could account for the experiences of her womanhood without difficulty.

Her introductory wail was pitched in a minor key, and as was remarked by the attending nurse, "Laws! missus! This here baby must

be a mistake! It's got the voice of a boy while it's a girl! It beats me if I ever heard a baby yell down in its boots before!"

From the first there could be no indecision regarding Eleonora's unusual voice, red hair, and variable disposition. Although the child's parents were not in advance of the age in parental wisdom and sympathetic control of a nature quite outside of their experience or comprehension, they did for her all that great love and abundant means can do when unguided by a good understanding between parent and child. By the time ten years had done their best for "Nolie" (the meaningless abbreviation of a really beautiful name), her chief troubles in life arose from the color of her hair and sadly abundant freckles.

Her original phraseology and ready replies made her a combination of companion and plaything for her father, a good-natured, successful business man, overly fond of chaffing his clever, homely child. About this time upon one occasion, Mr. Dean said, as he held her on his knee, while he stroked the soft, brilliant hair, "Nolie, if you will count the freckles on your face, I'll give you a dollar a freckle."



"Honor bright, papa?" she asked, with some defiance in the eyes whose color no one ever succeeded in defining, for they partook of the chameleon nature, expressing a sunny day or a cyclone equally well and naturally. Several days after her father made this flippant, thoughtless statement Eleonora was discovered sitting in front of the mirror of the dresser in her own bed-chamber with her face marked off into squares by a pencil; and the enterprising money-maker had counted all of the freckles in each square, putting the numbers down on a piece of paper preparatory to finding the sum of the squares. The freckles coming to one hundred, Eleonora had that amount in dollars deposited in bank by her father, who laughed for a week over "Nolie's business ability," as he called this illustration of inherent patience and perseverance when the exercise of such virtues meant a tangible compensation.

Mrs. Dean, sitting reading, was shocked by a bang at the door, followed by her daughter shouting and singing to a tune of her own, "My hair is n't red! My hair is n't red! I can prove it! I can prove it!" and springing up onto the arm of her mother's chair, she placed beside her

long braid a piece of scarlet worsted with an air of triumph worthy a better cause.

One spring Eleonora seemed for a week absent-minded and unduly introspective, with a touch of expectancy about her whole demeanor. Mr. Dean, chancing to walk about his favorite flower gardens, discovered her with an old kitchen-knife digging into the ground beneath the shade of a tree. "What are you at now, Witch?" he demanded.

"You won't tell, will you?" she asked, looking up in a confiding way at him. When he promised, she said, "There's a bird down here I'm digging for." "A bird!" exclaimed the amazed parent. "Yes, father. A sparrow I found dead. I buried it a week ago to see what would happen to it in the ground, for I heard the minister say we mustn't cry over dead people because they'd be born again."

So much for her investigating turn of mind.

By this time she insisted upon saying Father and Mother, giving as her reason that only little girls and cry-babies said Papa and Mamma.

Her preference was for playing alone or with "a miscellaneous dog," which she loved to extremity — "Just because other people are down

on him," she explained. "The poor thing can't help being ugly any more than I can. He has n't got any home, and I'm going to take care of him. I don't care what anybody says. So there!"

Boys she liked passably well as playfellows, but girls and dolls were entirely out of touch with her turn of mind. As a very little girl her strange voice began to be remarked both in speech and in song. It remained persistently deep and unlike the usual childish treble. Song seemed her natural mode of expression. After watching a political procession, she would march for hours around the garden walks with an American flag over one shoulder in lieu of a gun, shouting, "The Star-Spangled Banner" or "Marching Through Georgia," sometimes to the distress of the neighbors, who would have gladly taken her patriotism for granted.

The Dean homestead was located in a small New England city, where each householder enjoyed a healthy share of good Mother Earth about his home; consequently, Eleonora lived principally on ozone, for she was invariably in too great a hurry to get out of doors to do justice to a less ethereal diet. Being an

only child until nearly eleven years of age, a certain emotional sensitiveness and love of her own society was developed rather than retarded in its growth. When a baby sister came, followed in a few years by her father's death, Eleonora was left more and more to the working out of life's problems alone.

While still a little girl, she asked her father one day, "Am I two people or one people to you, father?" Being by this time accustomed to the unexpected in his child, Mr. Dean replied, "One person, Witch, excepting when a little of the devil shows in you." "That's it, father!" she cried in joy of his unintentional comprehension. "I'm two people to myself! Some days I look inside like a little white angel, then she goes away, and I am a black boy who is just as bad as he can be. Have you got 'em both inside you?"

After singing came dancing as her happiest physical means of expression. At the parties given among the young people of her school and social acquaintance she would present altogether a different face to the world from the familiar one, for the music played upon her nervous system a new tune of life, and she

was no longer the girl born with an interrogation point after her, but a careless, buoyant animal.

The night of her *début* ball, she said to her mother when the triumphs and joys of the first full sway of egotism were being put to rest for the night, "Mother, dear, would it not be terrible to marry a clergyman? I should have to stop dancing! I could n't sleep last night for thinking about it."

"But, my dear, I did not know you had one in view."

"Oh, I have n't; but you see the abstract possibility of never waltzing again would be cruel. Mother, will you tell me something frankly?"

"Yes, my child, what wonderful query have we on hand now?"

Looking at herself in the glass, Eleonora asked, "Do you think I am as ugly as I used to be? Is n't my hair growing darker?"

"Eleonora, you have had more than enough flattery for one night, — but this I will say because you are in a fair way to become morbid on the subject: you are not ugly in the least now that the freckles have faded out

of your skin, and mother thinks your hair beautiful."

"Is that really true, dear? I decided I could not be so very bad to-night, when all the men seemed to find something calling them wherever I happened to be."

"Your constant harping on that theme surprises me, Nolie, for you are the last girl of my acquaintance I should suspect of petty vanity. Such an element does not agree with your other characteristics in the least."

"Why, mother! Don't you know, after all these years, that I and myself don't hang together a bit! You ought to know why better than any one else—you brought me here with all of my inconsistencies."

"Poor child! Poor child!" murmured Mrs. Dean, with an arm about the head, covered with hair subdued now to the tint immortalized by Carolus Duran in his Luxembourg picture of a woman's back. "I heard some one speak of my child once as 'a fascinating freak,' and I look into her sealed future with apprehension as to what trials this very magnetism and unexpectedness of mind may bring her."

“Fancy me a piece of hand-painted china, all the better for the firing, and rest in peace about ‘the fascinating freak.’ Good night, my poor worrying mother, I’m so glad I am not ugly any more!”

CHAPTER II

WHEN Richard Dean was called on for investigations into futurity his mundane affairs were left in a somewhat muddled condition. Mrs. Dean, being both brave and discreet, immediately began to study the lessons of retrenchment and pecuniary prudence. They were comfortably well off, but with insufficient for the gratification of luxurious tastes. As the years brought Eleonora to a realization of life on its serious and seamy sides, she began instinctively to feel about for some specific moorings. She had hitherto danced, sung, flirted, and read her days away, but the very act of seeing lawyers and signing papers after her twenty-first birthday, seemed to bring to mind glimpses of herself as she was and as she could be were her possibilities not still latent. Of course there had been mutterings of the outburst of inclination for years past, from the slough of habitude into which she had sunk,

more through lack of inspiration than personal willingness, for the girl was naturally inclined to hitch her wagon to a star, according to Emerson's advice, and, without urging, she had been an omnivorous reader of all kinds of literature. An undirected taste for books is preferable to no taste at all. In her case great thoughts, little thoughts, and middle-sized thoughts were warring in her mind for proper placement and mutual relation. No one ever needed the touch of cosmopolitan life more than did this impetuous, original, high-minded, artistic, ignorant girl. She resembled the finest possible clay, ready for the moulder's hand. Soon after attaining her majority she remarked to her mother, "We must have a talk, for I am thinking of going away."

"Going away!" exclaimed Mrs. Dean, with lifted eyebrows. "Where are you going? To New York to visit the Jennings?"

"No, mother dear, I am going to Boston to learn to sing."

"To sing!" was the limit of Mrs. Dean's vocabulary for a moment, then — "I thought you could sing now; you have certainly had enough spent on a very beautiful voice."

"Yes, perhaps my instruction has been good enough in its way, but what I must have is expressed by that trite word 'atmosphere.' Oh, mother! I fear you will not understand! I must have an occupation! I must direct my mind and soul towards some channel of expression for the emotions inside me which I never show to people. I *must* have a career of some sort. If I can go to Boston for a few years, then to Europe, I shall be more happy than I can say, and I will venture my little all if you will consent. You have Margaret, besides your business and social ties here, so I cannot ask you to go with me; but go I *must*, or die of rusting out in society which has long since bored me. Say you will let me go, mother, for I wish you to be willing before I leave you."

This sudden and eruptive outburst had partially stunned Mrs. Dean, who, though a good-intentioned woman, was only about an inch wide in her views regarding professional life for a girl.

"Are you unhappy in your home, Eleonora?" she asked, with a touch of offended motherhood in her tone.

"No, mother, I am happy with you and Mar-

garet and the dear old home, but I cannot go on this way all of my life. I shall soon be a dried-up old maid like Miss Flack. Then, can't you understand? I want to DO something — to live among people who do and think, to know what real life is, and to show the gift of voice, which to me is divine, to the world."

Mrs. Dean ceased to follow after the reference to spinsterhood, and when Eleonora paused she asked, "Why should you be an old maid any more than other girls? Dear knows, you are not lacking in admirers, but you are absolutely perverse about them all. There is Jim Leighton —"

"Don't!" interrupted Eleonora. "Please do not enumerate them! They are all well enough in their way; but to begin with I am not a marrying person, and to end with, if I were, the man would have to possess a brain I could fall down before — showing powers of thought and originality I long for myself and have not."

"What do you mean by not being a marrying person?"

"It is difficult to explain. But don't you know how all young girls talk about 'when I get married' with absolute certainty and feeling of

approaching marriage? I never have talked that way. I cannot imagine myself married — tied to one man. I cannot explain because I cannot analyze the difference between other girls and myself. All I know is that I must try my wings even now, when it is late in life to begin earnest work at an art."

This one discussion did not settle the question, being merely a wordy skirmish compared with that which followed with family and friends.

Eleonora finally won the day, as was her habit. Her people, among themselves, took the attitude of humoring "one of Nolie's whims," agreeing that a season in town would do her no harm, and that her voice, in any case, was worth cultivating under the best masters. They deemed her a foolish virgin to burn her pecuniary oil to its limit, but as Aunt Henrietta remarked to Uncle John, "Nolie may make a good match up in Boston. With her hair and eyes and smile it will be queer if she does n't, and we must see that she has good letters of introduction."

By October of that year Eleonora Dean was settled in her new world, boarding in a private

family of musicians, whose willingness to take her in was her first and perhaps best stroke of Fortunatus' wand during that season.

It is said that the first year of matrimony is altogether the most crucial to the participants. The same must be asserted of the first leap into art, even when equipped with native talent, intelligence, and enthusiasm. These stalwart supporters cannot uphold one against discouragement, impatience, and the gradual realization of the retreat of the Ideal as one advances.

To every moment of rapture in an artist's life there stands in opposition hours of actual and acute misery, for self-satisfaction is the death-knell to genius. The well-known singing-master to whom she went, with breathless awe of his opinion, assured her of the fortune in her voice; also, that she knew nothing — *absolutely nothing*; that her previous instruction had done more harm than good. As she walked meditatively up Boylston Street after hearing his verdict, there was not the anticipated joy in her heart.

"I am not discouraged," she communed with herself, "because he said I sang badly. I should not have decided to spend my money

upon him for lessons if I were satisfied. Money not Art seems to be his God, and I do not believe my voice is in as bad a way as he says. I wonder if he is the man for me?" she added with a sigh. "He is celebrated as a teacher, and I must not depend too much upon first impressions—a bad fault of mine, they say." Many times during that first week Eleonora regretted her step aside from the beaten paths of existence.

CHAPTER III

DURING that winter Eleonora expended twice the necessary energy upon her new occupations, owing to deficiency in concentrative powers and knowledge of the advantage of systematic work. Being thorough in every undertaking, she determined to conquer art instead of growing gradually into intellectual proportions fitting its embrace. This mistake cannot righteously be laid at her door because without the guiding hand of experience enthusiasm is apt to overleap the mark. If the youthful mind knocking at the door of beauty's expression could meet oftener with teachers of more than the mere mechanics of Art how much disappointment and cruel failure would be saved!

During the course of the winter Eleonora secured a church position by means of her singing-master's influence. The salary from this church helped toward her musical education,

the cost of which was rapidly making inroads upon her small capital.

The following summer Mrs. Dean died after a short illness, leaving little Margaret to Eleonora's care and enough of this world's goods to insure her daughters' comfort. At first Eleonora showed signs of morbid regret for her wilful separation from her mother during the last year of her life. This self-reproach, combined with sincerest grief and a sense of being adrift from immediate family ties, with the exception of the little sister too young for companionship, developed the sober side of Eleonora's character as no event had succeeded in doing hitherto.

When the orphaned girls went up to town for the ensuing winter they were both taken in by kind, motherly Mrs. Koehne, who with her son and daughter had been really more of an educational influence in Eleonora's life the year previous than the singing-master from whom she had expected so much.

Mrs. Koehne in her early life in her native Germany had been a professional pianist, but marrying a young school-master they decided to give Fate a trial in the new country. On the

heels of this decision they started across in a sailing-vessel, carrying, besides household furniture and trunks, three feather beds, the baby boy Rudolf, and enough provisions to last them the three weeks' voyage. In the German schools a teacher must pass a musical examination besides that in the pedagogic branches before he secures his certificate; consequently Herr Koehne, as well as his wife, pursued music as a means of livelihood when finally America was reached with the loss of only one feather bed.

Several years later, when they were fairly established in their united efforts at a living, a girl whom they named Frieda was born to them.

Mr. Koehne's death when the children were still to be educated left his strong-hearted, firm-minded wife to the responsibility of guiding their young feet. A small life insurance eked out her own earnings towards their support and education.

Rudolf had been put at both piano and violin by the time he could sit on a stool or hold a bow. His preference settled upon the latter, and though not a genius he had become

a conscientious, intellectual musician, at this time holding a place among the first violins of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and an enviable position as teacher of his instrument, for teaching was his forte, music being to him not a passion so much as a science.

Frieda took up the piano where her mother left off as a teacher, after several years spent with her brother in Berlin, where Mrs. Koehne managed to keep them both, doing her utmost to prepare her boy and girl for good work in the field of her highest ambition. Frieda Koehne was endowed with the emotional feeling for music largely left out of her brother, but a disappointing physique withdrew her entirely from the lists of the virtuosi. She had established herself as a piano teacher on her return from Berlin, relieving her mother of a large part of her clientèle, which finally devolved entirely upon the girl as Mrs. Koehne was persuaded unwillingly to give up professional life and live only for the happiness of her children, governing their home domestically and entertaining their friends every Sunday night with her fund of interesting reminiscences and personal encouragement of every worthy ambition.

Into this home came the magnetic, vocal Eleonora, and after one winter of life together, rather than give her up to strangers, and brooding over her sorrow, they consented to make a home also for the little sister.

The feminine portion of this family sat about the lamp in the music room one evening at the end of a late November day which had been filled for them with work and snowflakes.

Looking up from her perusal of the evening paper, Mrs. Koehne said, "Girls, we must have dinner without Rudolf unless he comes soon, or we shall be late for that concert." No voice dissenting to her proposition, dinner was ordered and begun when Rudolf's voice was heard talking German to some one in the hall above. A man's hearty laughter broke out at something he said, for, as Eleonora explained, Rudolf was a great wag in his native tongue but could not even see an English joke, much less make one. Presently down they both came, without a word of warning as to the advent of the unexpected guest. Rudolf invariably took for granted a superfluity of food and welcome at their home table. "Here we are," he announced, "*sans cérémonie, meine Mutter!* I almost dragged

him here by the ear, a most reluctant guest. Ah, I forget! you do not know his name! He is my new friend of this year who plays beside me in the orchestra. He is Berthold Ulrich from *das Vaterland*, and filled with *Heimweh*. *Nicht wahr*, Berthold? So I made him come along."

During this speech Mrs. Koehne had advanced, holding out both hands to the stranger, bidding him welcome in his mother tongue; then presented him to the girls, who had meantime managed to have an extra place laid at the table.

Eleonora looked up at this middle-aged foreigner, and instantly there flashed through her consciousness, "I have passed through this scene before, though surely I have never met this man!"

Ulrich's voice invariably affected the stranger to a query as to how Nature could have fashioned a tall, stalwart manly-looking man with so soft and oily a vocal organ.

His eyes seemed to contain an unending perspective, and as his first embarrassment, caused by the abrupt entrance, wore away he revealed himself an easy-mannered man of the world

with a glib tongue backed by the appearance at least of unusual general information. He admitted the loneliness of his life in Boston, being new to the country, orchestra and his fellow-workers, his acquaintance being limited when he arrived to the conductor of the orchestra, who had been his friend in youth and had persuaded him to try the new life. They all felt the man's irresistible personality, even to little Margaret, who confided to Eleonora, "The new man is n't a bit handsome, but he makes you think he is."

Ulrich's English was fluent and grammatical, though considerably Teutonic in pronunciation. He told them he had learned the language first at school, and then from English friends. His conversation was directed mainly to Mrs. Koehne and Rudolf, but his eyes would meet Eleonora's glance frequently, as though he had discovered a silent source of communion. With her realization of this subtle flattery, came a strong feeling of pride in it on her part, and an unconscious spurring on to her best conversational efforts when she did speak, which was not often during the dinner, for she felt unaccountably subdued, as though some event of import-

ance were pending. Human beings of coarser clay may well rejoice in their freedom from such disturbing emotional elements of disposition or eccentricities of nerve force.

Owing to the concert engagement, the ladies were obliged to hurry away, leaving the men to coffee, smoke, and argument. When Mrs. Koehne urged Ulrich to feel at home in their midst, and to join them often without ceremony, he grasped her hand warmly, saying, "Thank you, dear lady, nothing could give me more pleasure! You have driven the *Heimweh* out of the back door of my heart, and continued acquaintance would lock it out, I feel sure." As he made his pretty speech, he looked once incidentally at Eleonora, who stood beside them, with a glance including her among the attractions of further acquaintance.

CHAPTER IV

FRIEDA KOEHNE had been of much musicianly help to Eleonora by her willingness to accompany song singing, and by her invaluable hints regarding the traditions surrounding the singing of the German Lied, which she had gathered from the atmosphere of her student days in Germany.

One afternoon the two girls were absorbed in this mutual study, when Frieda abruptly ceased playing before the final chord of "Der Todt und Das Mädchen," of Schubert's, which usually called out their united adulation, and was by the family considered Eleonora's *pièce de résistance*. Frieda looked up, with a cloud on her delicate, sensitive face, saying, "You believe I am your friend, Lenore?"

"My friend?" exclaimed the singer, in surprise; "most certainly. I consider you the best I have."

"Then will you object if I, who know nothing technically of tone production, tell you that I liked your voice better before you began study

here than I do now? You sing, of course, in a more musicianly manner than before, but frequently there seems great effort and harshness in the tone not natural to the voice, with its great flexibility and rich coloring. Notwithstanding your heavy low voice (or perhaps on account of it), you are to my mind a dramatic soprano, with enough there to do opera, while here you are singing contralto songs, and not even them with ease."

The tears had been slowly filling Eleonora's eyes, and she stood biting her lips for self-control. Frieda threw an arm around the girl's shoulders, crying, "*Meine alleliebste!* Have I hurt you? I only meant to do good!"

"No, no! it is not that," replied Eleonora, brokenly. "But you have expressed what I have been fearing. When I came to Boston there were many crudities in my voice, I know; but, as you say, the tone was free and without effort. Now, after doing some of the exercises I am given, my throat really aches, and a half hour's singing makes me hoarse. Have you noticed, dear, how cloudy even my speaking voice becomes some days, when I have not a sign of a cold? Am I on the wrong track,

Frieda? It seems presumptuous of me to assert more knowledge about the treatment of a voice than a man who has lived and breathed in the vocal profession for a lifetime, but there is something wrong either with him or me."

"Are you, too, Lenore, to be a victim of this modern mania for method which has ruined so many beautiful voices? Simplicity and naturalness were left behind years ago. Noise seems to be the necessity of the age of steam engines. I have believed for several months that you were forcing, if not straining, your voice."

"Yes," came the reply, from the depths of an arm-chair, into which the sad girl had sunk. "I used to think only of the sentiment expressed. Song seemed to me the greatest emotional power on earth; now I wonder if my larynx is up or down, and how the soft palate acts. I see the whole mechanical performance as set forth in the books with illustrated plates, that I have been advised to read. Some days I hate my voice, and never wish to make another sound! Think of all my time and money wasted, Frieda, when I had hoped for a career! nothing left but a ruined voice!"

Frieda stood beside Eleonora's chair in silence

for a moment, then asked, "Can't you stop the lessons if they are doing you harm?"

"Yes, I could do that; but such a course means the loss of my church position, which you know he controls; and then besides, I fear to do him injustice, for I believe he is conscientious in the way he trains the voice, but his phraseology is so involved that my poor old brain cannot meet his thought. I must keep the church position in order to pay for my lessons and Margaret's schooling. Sometimes of late I have felt tempted to throw over the attempt to make a career, take Margaret back to our old home, and there dry up into a New England spinster along with the majority." Her sense of humor came to the rescue of her depression and she added: "Never mind my whine, Frieda — no doubt it is all my own fault. Perhaps I work too hard, as he says. At any rate, I will keep on a few months longer, awaiting better results — no great harm can come to the voice in that length of time."

"I don't know about that," returned Frieda, shaking her head gravely. "The voice is a delicate instrument, and if you are forcing or straining it you run great risks. My advice is

to stop now and see what effect a few weeks' rest would have upon it."

"Oh, you dear old croaker! I can't afford to stop now. I must go on to the end of my term at any rate."

"A few dollars lost now might mean thousands gained for the future," said Frieda. "But you know best. I only regret my inability to help you out of the difficulty;" and with a sympathetic pat on the shoulder she permitted Eleonora to leave her as the ringing of the door-bell announced a pupil.

As time moved briskly on, it became the habit of Berthold Ulrich to attend Mrs. Koehne's Sunday evenings, to which came not only musicians but wielders of both brush and pen also.

When he first heard Eleonora sing it was at one of these evenings, whose rule was a ready compliance from each individual if asked to do the thing he or she was supposed to do. After the song Ulrich moved forward towards Eleonora with a motion indicative of a suppressed desire to take both hands, saying: "Bravo! Miss Dean. The fire is there! you must succeed! Is it opera you are trying for? No? what then? you could do it!"

"Is this meant for encouragement of a novice, Mr. Ulrich?" she replied. "My aim at present is oratorio. I shall hardly try opera — nor much of anything," she continued bitterly, "if my voice does not improve."

"Ah, my dear Miss Dean, that is but the artist's natural depression. When I was younger I swore to conquer a particular phrase in which the harmonics eluded my bow entirely. In the end — after six weeks' practice on the one phrase — I got up and gave the bed in my room a good sound beating with my violin and —"

"Did you ruin the poor fiddle?" she interrupted.

"No, not entirely, because the bed-clothes were soft and proved its friend."

"Is that the way you let off steam nowadays?" asked Eleonora, with the smile for which he had grown to wait.

"Oh, my steam was let off years ago. I never try the impossible nowadays. Shortly after that beating episode I discovered I was not a genius, deciding accordingly that wisdom suggested a clear understanding of my limitations followed by future work along the line of my possibilities and laziness, so I am a fiddler in the orchestra

and not the concertmeister either.— But I am a most uninteresting subject. To return to a delightful one: let me tell you in encouragement what our first 'cellist said of your voice. I asked him if you could sing. He replied, 'Indeed, yes, she will sing when she has lived the life longer. She told me her ambition was to make her chest tones resemble that of my 'cello, and I think she has not far to go.' Does that make you feel better?"

"Yes, you always do," she replied. "I'll engage you by the day as my renovator! How would you like the difficult position? I fancy you are not enamoured of hard work?"

He looked at the girl, now sitting on the piano-chair, her shadowy eyes almost black from excitement and a brilliant spot of color in each cheek from the same cause, with the red-bronze hair burnished by the gaslight from above, and replied: "Did you ever hear of Eve, Fraülein?"

"Yes, once or twice."

"I've always looked upon Eve as a fortunate lady."

"Why? On account of Adam or The Serpent?"

"Adam, to be sure. She must have en-

joyed so thoroughly her power over him. That mirror opposite will give you some idea of my meaning."

"I fail to see what Eve has to do with my reflection."

"Do as I say and you will know," Ulrich commanded.

Instinctively she glanced at the mirror, for his was a compelling mind. The pink grew into red on Eleonora's delicate skin, which had long ago outgrown the juvenile freckles, and with assumed unconsciousness, she replied: "You must at one time have compiled almanacs, for your riddles occasionally smack of that form of literary production."

"'None are so blind as those who will not see,' or something which means that, for I am a poor hand at quoting," he said; and went on: "I am glad you inserted 'occasionally,' for then, perhaps, I have some lucid moments in your eyes. It is my ambition to appear well there if nowhere else."

"We must stop where we started — with flattery, for here comes Mr. Forsythe, who is to do some Brahms for us this evening;" and rising, she started forward to meet the pianist; but

Ulrich caught the end of a white silk scarf hanging from her shoulders, murmuring almost inaudibly, "I will *make* you understand me yet."

Up to this time Eleonora had been strongly aware of an indescribable force and fascination conveyed in every word or look of this man, but hitherto there had been nothing personal in her feeling concerning this influence, which she saw extended to every one approaching him. After that conversation she noticed her own sense of loss if he did not come to their Sunday evenings. Moreover, at the Symphony concerts her eyes were prone to hunt him out in his place among the first violins before any of the other men of her acquaintance. When they were together their atmosphere took on the feeling of a day when electrical storm-clouds are looming. She knew nothing more of him than he chose to tell her, because Rudolf and their mutual acquaintances were equally ignorant of his past. He rarely talked of himself, his conversational forte being in the way of generalization, without the least apparent intention of concealment. She took for granted his unmarried state, as did every one else, because he made no mention of a wife.

CHAPTER V

"WHAT do you think of us the longer you know us, Ulrich?" asked Rudolf Koehne, as the two men sat immersed in the joys that only a pipe can give. No doubt in the Orthodox heaven there may be higher ties binding men together, but there can be none stronger than the communion of a smoke. Men are happily relieved from the necessity of making talk because a silence between them is usually filled with a smoky interchange of thought subtle, ephemeral, and fascinating.

Before replying, Ulrich took a deep pull from his pipe for inspiration, then asked: "Who do you mean by 'us'? Your mother and sister grow more charming. About you and Miss Dean I am not so certain, both being of such reserved natures one cannot safely judge in a hurry."

"Oh, come! old man, irony does not become you. I meant what do you think of America and its Art as viewed from an altogether cos-

mopolitan standpoint—that of a German educated in Paris?”

“Has America an Art?” returned Ulrich, pulling hard to keep an uncertain light aglow in the bowl of his pipe.

“Has America an Art! Of course she has! In my mind this country holds the elements of the most superlative Art life ever known!”

“Where does she keep them?”

“In the minds of a race composed of representatives of all nations. This conglomerate mass will finally be amalgamated into the greatest people on earth, possessing the inherited feeling for the beautiful handed down from the Latin races, and the forceful strength of mind and physique from the Teutons, Celts, Saxons, and Norsemen!”

“You remind me of the American I once knew who said to me in London, ‘Oh, yes; this is a big enough town, but if you want to see the real thing, come to America.’”

“Then you wish me to infer that you look with contempt upon our future?”

“Not a bit of it, my boy! The development of music in particular in America during the past twenty years has been almost phenomenal;

but I cannot see that the Americans are doing the developing except by furnishing the money. The people who make the music are generally Germans; most of the music played is German; hence, in my opinion, there will be no truly American Art in music. It will be Germany grafted onto America or *vice versa*. As for painting, that is mostly French, although I must admit done by Americans, and well done. The Art of Letters seems to me the most advanced with you, but in that direction I am not really capable of judging, being a foreigner."

"But you are reviewing us as we stand now, while I am contemplating the future. I admit that, with a few notable exceptions, the all-around musician in America is of foreign birth; but I look upon these men as pioneers clearing the æsthetic settlements preparatory to the house building on firm foundations of the true-born American."

"That may be so; but I cannot imagine a school of art in a country made up of such a diversity of opinions, tastes, and blood,—at least not until hundreds of years have boiled down these fighting elements into a compact mass of national brotherhood. What feeling

of companionship, *bon camaraderie*, is there among musicians in America? Their attitude towards each other is like this," snarling up his face and making his hands into a strong resemblance to the claws of a cat ready to scratch. "They do not work together to advance the art they are supposed to love, but work separately to pull each other down. They are musical anarchists."

"You look for nothing but the bad. Remember that a national art comes from the people, not from a few representative musicians, the majority of them, as you said yourself, Germans. Think of the rapt attention of our Symphony concert audiences, then say there is not true musical feeling if you can —"

"Yes," interrupted the sceptic. "They go because music is now the fashion, especially in Boston."

"I do not believe that! I have lived here among these people all of my life and I know their enthusiasm amounts to more than 'the correct thing to do.' No doubt in the beginning that was so, but during ten years past, our audiences have felt what we give them!" In his ardor Rudolf began to pace the floor. "I tell

you I always know when an audience is *en rapport* with us! and I am more sure than of my own salvation that the Americans have the true art feeling — (crude still, naturally enough), but some day we will show you what we can do!”

“If there were many of them caring as much about the matter as you do the truth of your prophesy would be a foregone conclusion, but you are only half American.”

“Suppose we instance a typical American, Eleonora Dean. She is a type of the music-loving, crude girl with fine interpretative abilities and a great future unless this trouble with the voice becomes chronic.”

“It is hardly fair for me to predict, but my intuition tells me that without a certain element now lacking in her nature she will never be the great artist in the sense that Bernhardt is an artist, for she cannot let herself go, she is self-conscious after the fashion of her race. However, few enough of our singers nowadays have any temperament, so no doubt she will succeed in the usual way as an oratorio and concert singer — but for opera! There must be more! I know a woman who is Satan’s sister if he has one. Before she goes on as Elsa you hate her,

but leave the stage and see her from the front: then you have the exquisite, spiritual maiden, ideal, poetic! How does she do it? Of course by means of the same imaginative powers which enabled some of the poetic blackguards of the past to write ideal poetry. Now Miss Dean has all but this element, which is the inevitable sign of genius. She *is* the pure, ideal Elsa herself; but put her on the stage and instead of *putting* her own nature into the part she would be herself — at that distance but a gesticulating icicle. I do not pretend to explain this, I only know it to be a fact. However, there is hope for her — a grand passion would make her a great singer."

Just then the front door opened and the voices of Mrs. Koehne and Eleonora were heard.

Rudolf, going forward to meet them, exclaimed: "Meine Mutter und Lenore, come and defend your country! will we not show this slanderer what America can do for *die Kunst*?"

"It looks as though I might be called upon to defend our friend as well as our country," said Mrs. Koehne, giving Ulrich her hand. "what is it all about?"

Eleonora shook hands with Ulrich and sat down by the west windows where the afternoon

sunlight poured in effectively upon the burnished hair coiled low on her neck under a large black hat, but at the same time revealing a look of age in her eyes only noticeable during the past few weeks. "It is the old battle-field, Mrs. Koehne, art to be or art not to be in America," explained Ulrich, with a laugh.

"Surely you were not denying America's possibilities!" exclaimed Mrs. Koehne; and then the situation was reviewed with amendments, the discussion ending about as conclusively as usual, and drifting away from specifically American art into the broadest fields of questioning, relative to the development and beauties of this elusive Goddess. Finally Eleonora said, "May I ask this complement of authorities for an explanation of a particular lacking I have within myself? I have an idea that art as known to the truly great is something more than a mere channel of emotions, as I fear it is only with me. Sometimes I fancy that writing or acting would have satisfied my craving for expression quite as well as music, had I not been endowed with a voice as an active vehicle in the musical branch, such as I do not possess in other directions. Speech does not express the high-

est and best within me, so I turn to some other outlet, often doubting that I am 'possessed' by music as the artist would be."

"Ah! my child, you but express a universal lacking among those who strive to give to the world a bit of their own heaven. The man or woman who is possessed is the genius—within him is the inexplicable power given but to the chosen few. He is God's noblest thought."

"Then why are not all geniuses moral giants?" inquired Eleonora, asking the question as difficult to answer as why the flowers are differently tinted.

"Now, dear, you have propounded one of the great riddles. But I can tell you from my individual standpoint that genius belongs to the spiritual nature, and sometimes in the progress of the soul it inhabits for a short time some poor debased animal form, the promptings of which cannot be entirely subdued by the spirit not yet perfected."

"My dear little Buddhistic mother!" cried Rudolf, "wait a bit! wait a bit! Ulrich and I are clods, you must remember! come down to earth. We really can't follow you and Eleonora ever, if we are tied to your apron strings."

"Speak for yourself, Master Rudolf," said Ulrich. "My conscience is light enough to permit me to roost on their wings as they fly."

"You are both undeserving, wicked, commonplace boys, without bumps of reverence, and in danger of losing your places in my heart," replied Mrs. Koehne, running her hands through her son's dark curly hair as he knelt beside her in mock penitence. Assuming his most tragic air he began to sing, "Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten dass ich so traurig bin," whereupon Ulrich started up, crying, "Adieu! Adieu! Life has too many burdens to permit of one's adding Rudolf's singing!" Seizing his hat he made for the door, calling back, "Remember the rehearsal to-morrow at two, *meine nachtigal*."

While still laughing at "the boys' nonsense" Mrs. Koehne said, "It seems to me Berthold Ulrich has grown ten years younger since the first night you brought him here, Rudolf. America must agree with him."

"Something does evidently, for he seems like another man. Don't you think so, Lenore?" asked Rudolf.

Eleonora had risen to remove her hat, and stood facing a mirror with her back to him as

she replied, "I hardly know. Mr. Ulrich has always seemed younger to me than his years."

Mrs. Koehne went upstairs. Eleonora continued standing before the mirror arranging her hair, which had been ruffled by the wind. Rudolf sat watching her, humming the while his Lorelei song, "Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten." Suddenly he stopped, saying half to himself: "I am glad she wears green — it makes the resemblance more striking, for Lorelei ought to be clad in diaphanous greens."

"What *are* you talking about, Rudolf?" asked Eleonora, turning around and covering him with her astonished eyes.

"You," he replied.

"About me? I heard the Lorelei's name. What has she to do with me?"

"Everything in my eyes," he replied. "You are my Lorelei. You have drawn me down into the whirlpool of unrequited love, but somehow I am not unhappy. I care more for an ideal of a woman than I ever would for a woman possessed. You see I ask nothing from you, for I feel that you do not love me — but you are my beautiful Lorelei, and you do not mind my worshipping you, do you, Lenore?"

Eleonora had sunk down into a chair as though weakened by surprise, for she and Rudolf had lived so entirely as brother and sister, that for a moment she was impelled to believe he had taken leave of his senses.

"I do not think I understand you, Rudolf," she finally uttered.

"You could scarcely understand — I hardly do myself. All that I know is, that you are my ideal, and that I shall continue to love you. Some people would call me a fool. Who knows? Perhaps I am, but I am a happy fool because I live with you in a world of my own. Even now, when I know your heart belongs to another man, I am happy in my own way." She looked up quickly at this last, but said nothing, and he leaned back in his chair, looking beyond her into the evening sky. "I do not think," he continued, "I would wish to marry you if I could, for you fulfil my dream of the Good and Beautiful. Ordinary married life might disillusion me. But you must always be good and beautiful for my sake, dear, so that my dream may not be broken."

The tears came to Eleonora's eyes, and she said brokenly, "Dolf, Dolf, you will break my

heart. I am not the woman you are talking about."

"Yes, you are the woman, and if I can do anything for you, be of any use, let me know — perhaps you will need me. Let me help you, if I can, Lenore; that is all I ask besides your friendship."

And he went quietly upstairs, leaving her sitting there in the dusk with her own sad heart.

CHAPTER VI

"BUT, Doctor, what do you think is the matter with my voice? There is no sore throat, as you say, and still I am perpetually hoarse, and part of the head voice is gone entirely. I can't make a sound up there," said Eleonora, sitting in the chair placed in front of the reflector used for the laryngoscope in the office of the physician who was proving an invaluable friend throughout her troubles. He was a kind-hearted, out-spoken man, quick at diagnosis and more practical than most of his brethren in the profession.

"Damme, my dear! Can't you see that your vocal cords have been strained! There's nothing the matter with the throat — or what you call the throat. I tell you singing-teachers don't teach singing nowadays. They teach 'method,' and turn out a lot of girls just like you, or worse off. If I had the ordering of

things, I'd turn the whole lot of 'em over to the cannibals for consumption, then perhaps we'd have some real singing again. It makes me sick to think of your voice the way it was and then listen to it now! I don't pretend to know what has been done to you, or what you have done to yourself, but I'll tell you this one thing, if you don't stop all attempt at using the voice and give it absolute rest, you'll never sing another note. I say damn the whole business!" and her energetic friend paced up and down as though he would enjoy a set-to with the entire vocal profession.

"Perhaps I have practised too much," said Eleonora, looking her despair as she sat before the reflected light, which lent rather a ghastly color to her face.

"I don't doubt in the least but you have, for I can see that you are a bundle of nerves and ambitions. Now you just stop worrying — go off to some place for a long rest, and as for my bill that you asked for — there is none. That is the one way I have of doing good in the world, by helping those who try to help themselves — when you get up and I get down, then you can pay. There, my child, don't cry about

it! you'll be all right if you cut loose from the whole concern here. If after six months of rest your voice comes back, then sing naturally, just like speaking on different pitches, use your breath all right, and forget all about this confounded and eternal 'tone production.'" Eleonora for fear of a break-down, for which weakness she had almost a man's contempt, only held out her hand to the kind physician and went out.

For several blocks she walked along almost blindly, for although this much had been intimated to her before, the blow of the doctor's frankly-expressed opinion proved momentarily overwhelming. Some one coming along behind her laid a hand on her arm crying out, "Lenore, what is the matter with you? you will get a ride in the patrol wagon if you walk like that;" and Frieda fell into step, changing her tone on catching a glimpse of Eleonora's face, continuing, "What is it, dear? Has anything happened?"

"I've just come from the doctor, and he says my voice is going, that he can do nothing for this hoarseness."

"My poor child," said Frieda, who seemed at all times older than Eleonora, partly from her usually calm, gentle manner and spiritual face,

and somewhat as she said from "my settled look of experience inherited from my last existence," "do not let him make you see the blackest side; he is almost brutally out-spoken in his truth-telling at times." But Eleonora was not to be consoled, no matter how Frieda turned the situation towards the light. Finally Frieda said as they approached their home, "I am glad I met you, dear, for I have something to tell you. Forget about yourself for a time, and turn your attention upon me and my affairs. Come up to my room," she continued, as they let themselves in with a latch key, "and we will talk it out."

Lenore's face changed as swiftly as her mood, and she exclaimed, "You don't mean —!"

"Yes, I do," said Frieda, looking properly conscious.

"To Frank Lancaster?"

"Yes."

"Hurrah for the bride! Come along, I'll help you upstairs!" and Eleonora caught her friend about the waist, and after waltzing her around the hall began to run her upstairs. Poor Frieda was rushed into her own room, settled in a chair with Eleonora on her lap, and

then the latter began, "When did it come off? How soon are you to be married? I always knew you were slippery! what's to become of our old maids' hall! Bereft of my voice, now you desert me," and she stopped for breath between laughter and tears.

"Just give me a half second and I'll tell you all that is proper for you to know," replied Frieda. Then followed the interesting particulars, after which Eleonora took a chair, ready for a matrimonial discussion.

"How do you feel about giving up your independence? I'd like to see the man for whom I could give up my art and all my future."

"But, Lenore, my future has no such dimensions as yours in any case," replied Frieda, smiling at her friend's tone. "As Frank is a painter, I shall always live among the things I love, and for that matter I never intend to give up teaching. He is most reasonable."

"Oh, yes, reasonable enough now, but wait until he gets you and tell me then how reasonable he is about your inclinations. However, painters' wives usually have to help make the bread and butter (not to speak of the cold potato), so perhaps you may have your own way."

"Lenore, you do talk in the most ridiculous way about marriage; you know you don't believe half you say."

"Believe! I should think I did believe every word and more too. Marriage is an abomination! about once a hundred you see a happy couple. If they have children the woman (if she is of the purely domestic type) forgets all about her husband in her immersion in them; and if there are no children he thinks she has not done her duty, and leaves her at home to think about it, while he is off at the club or some place else seeking compensation! Then, how many women are fit to be mothers anyway? I know of a woman who has one little boy about six years old, and what does she do, but leave that child alone the entire day with the servants, while she is gallivanting around town, shopping, lunching down town, going to matinees, and munching candy, if not chewing gum. The other day, she told me housekeeping and her child were more than she could bear, so she had decided to break up and go to boarding."

"But, my dear, do you think that weak nature would have been successful in any sphere of life, married or single?"

"I don't believe she would at any rate; but I am thinking of the wrong done the little boy left there to himself, and the mischief servants will put into his head."

"You always give such extreme illustrations in argument. There are hundreds of beautiful mothers to balance that bad one."

"One! why, there are thousands just like her. On account of that kind you and I have no vote. Do you suppose she ever thinks about her rights as long as there is candy and a *matinée*! No, nor would she go to the polls if she could vote, unless she thought of the opportunity to show off her clothes and ogle the men!"

"Lenore! Lenore! Don't forget charity, Christian or human! I think you are at this moment demonstrating the reason for the failure of the emancipation question. Women do not stand by each other. They must form a unit of thought and sisterhood before success in any united effort can come to them."

"Yes, you are right there. We have no spirit of organization, and do more harm than good to our own cause. If ever we do get a vote it will be because the men give it to us to stop the

eternal squabble over the question. I'm no whit better than the rest I know, and probably should make a worse mother than the woman I instanced. And that is why I think it would be wrong for me to marry, or any of my kind. There ought to be an examining bureau for motherhood and no woman ought to be allowed to marry unless able to pass a prescribed examination in the qualities requisite for true motherhood."

"It seems to me you leave the husband out of the question altogether. I hold wifehood quite as sacredly as I do motherhood."

"Yes, I suppose I do, but that is because I never see any of the ideal companionship one can only dream about. Don't you suppose I can imagine a companion, friend, lover, who would sympathize in my thoughts and ambitions as I would in his? No two men nor two women can be to each other mentally what a man and woman can be, and that is the one great argument in favor of matrimony; but the trouble is that affinity seems to cease as soon as marriage begins."

"That is the fault of the individual, not of the institution," insisted Frieda, "and does not

occur in the majority of cases. The romantic idealism you are looking for does not last long, to be sure, and a good thing it does not too, for nothing would be accomplished on earth were its inhabitants all Lysanders, Helenas, and Hermias sighing and spouting and groaning and moaning sickly sentiment."

"Have it so if you will, but nothing will ever convince me of the beauties of matrimony until I see more of them."

"No, Lenore, nothing will ever convince you and nobody will ever convince you, until the right man comes along, and then what a radical on the other side you will be!"

A shadow crossed Eleonora's face as she replied, "He must have died in his crib, that abstract man you are always talking about; but if he does turn up I never shall marry him because if I did all of the charm and fascination of my ideal would vanish, I feel sure."

"Come, Nolie, we are getting into deep waters. All I know is that I am happy and willing to take the risks. An old lady said to me once, 'My child, when you think you love a man, stop and decide whether you understand what "for better, for worse" means. Think if

you can love him when he grows old, withered, and perhaps an invalid with all the attractions of youth left behind; then if you are certain of yourself he is the right man.'"

"Oh, Frieda! you always were a saint, and if I were a man I'd marry you myself."

"No, I don't believe you would. You forget Frank."

"You don't, at any rate; you will spoil him to death, wait on him, and make a general baby of him. But just the same you are a dear, and I don't know what I shall do without you," and Eleonora gave her friend a look that few people had ever seen in her eyes.

CHAPTER VII

"BRAVO, Miss Dean. You would have made a pianist," exclaimed Ulrich, as he and Eleonora paused after a rapid concerto movement in which she had been accompanying him.

"Don't make fun of me," she replied. "I am doing my best, and angels they say can do no more."

He walked over to the window of Mrs. Koehne's music-room, where they were doing this bit of practice together. With his back turned to her he said, "I cannot make out whether you wilfully misunderstand me in a spirit of banter, or if it is that you are overly modest about your attainments."

Conversational silence ensued, and Eleonora sat at the piano, looking off at the sun's long rays waving good-night in the western horizon, unconsciously modulating the while with her

right hand on the keys. Finally she said, speaking slowly, "You mean, I presume, that you were in earnest in what you said about my playing. The truth is that I am a failure—a dead failure in every undertaking, and when you compliment me how can I think you sincere?"

"Why will you call yourself a failure? The loss of voice is but temporary. As long as you have health and ambition the world is before you."

"Yes, but even my physical strength seems to be going with the constant grieving over the vocal condition. Aside from my foolishly exaggerated artistic ambition I had hoped to make money so that Margaret could have the education her strong brain calls for. As it is, we will not quite starve, but I cannot do for her what I wished. No," she burst out, rising from the piano and walking up and down, "the Fates are against me. I presume I was never meant to have anything I really wanted. I give my heart, my soul, my body to the attainment of a certain object, and just before success is mine something happens to deprive me of it altogether, or something in me fails. I am tired of working for nothing! The genius is happy in

his self-applause, but poor mortals like myself must have the world's handclap as a stimulus. I know what you will say: 'Have patience!' — I am tired of the word! It was my daily food when the voice was slowly leaving me. I am sick of life and everything it contains!" she finally cried, throwing herself down into a chair and her arms across an adjacent table with her head cast down upon them.

Coming quickly to her side Ulrich said in his softest tone, "*Meine alleliebstel* you do not mean that last! Am not I — your friend — of some consequence in your life? Need I tell you that the world would be to me a void — an emptiness — were you not here!" Bending over her, he went on more tensely: "Tell me my great love is something to you. You must have known without words. Perhaps I cannot take the place of the voice, but my love, which has grown until I am nothing else, *must* strike some response in your heart. Look at me, *geliebte*."

Taking her head in his hand he turned the face towards him, forcing her to look directly at him, after which exchange of gaze denial on her part was useless. Taking her in his arms and

putting his cheek against hers, he cried, "You are mine, Lenore! you are mine! What do we care for the world and its conventionalities! you will be my wife in truth if not in law! What does a priest's blessing mean when the hearts are wedded? My beautiful Lenore," stroking her hair — "I shall be rich in possessing the gold of your hair —"

"Stop, Mr. Ulrich," interrupted Eleonora, straightening up to an erect posture, "I do not understand."

"You do not understand that I love you, *mon ange*? What more can I say? My English is so poor, but my love must speak. Let me hear how much you love me. Only your eyes have spoken."

"I am afraid it *is* love I feel for you, and I have shown you so. But you must tell me what you meant by 'a priest's blessing,' and 'the world's conventionalities,'" she said, rising and walking away from him.

A quick darkness passed over Ulrich's face, mingled with some surprise. Following after her he exclaimed almost with violence, "Are you pretending ignorance? Everybody knows I am married!"

"Married!" was all Eleonora could utter for a moment; then putting both hands to her head she muttered, "Because I wanted him! Because I wanted him!"

Ulrich took both of her hands, saying, "Can it be that you did not know? I thought you all knew. I never talk about that curse upon my life, for what good would it do? Come, sit beside me on the couch and I will tell you of my sorrows, and the woman who bears my name."

"Your wife!" muttered Eleonora, who still seemed stunned by the revelation.

"Yes, my wife legally, heart's dearest, but in no other way. I have not seen her for years. When I was but twenty-one I was studying in Paris, picking up what orchestral work and teaching I could find to supplement the small sum sent me by my father. In the same house with me over in the Quartier Latin, lodged an English singer. For several months I heard her practising, and decided she had talent. My interest deepened after meeting her on the stairway one day, when I realized that we had a beauty in the house — animal beauty only, for she had the brain of a — what shall I say, — well, an oyster. Finally I secured an introduc-

tion through our fellow lodgers — fool I was ! — I revered her beauty and her voice too much to introduce myself. Well, in a few months more I was completely in the toils of a woman about ten years my senior. She lived there alone apparently, and said she was waiting an engagement with an American manager to sing in opera in New York.

“There seemed no ulterior reason for her demonstrations of passion for a poor lad uneducated and penniless. After a little we were married, after which mad step I learned through a conversation I overheard between this woman and one of her intimates in the house, that she considered me the heir to a large fortune from my parents in Germany, thus accounting for her readiness to marry me. We had a stormy scene. I accused her of mercenary intentions, informing her at the same time that the heir she had mistaken me for was my cousin of the same name. She had heard of my rich uncle's family in Berlin, where she had lived for a time, as she seemed to have done in every European capital. She accused me of misleading her, and there could never again be peace between us. As time went on, and nothing more was heard

of her American opera season, I found I had two mouths to fill, for she was a lazy adventuress, unwilling to accept the engagements I could have got her. We had agreed to continue our careers, aiding each other in every ambition. She could talk! No one better! She was smart enough for that!" with a sneer transforming his face. "But the end was inevitable. My temper was fiery and uncontrolled in those days, and when on top of discovering her reasons for marrying me I learned of her past career, and that even then while I was out earning a living she was spending that time at the rooms of a French broker, I picked up my few belongings and left Paris over night. She followed me to Vienna, but my foolish passion had turned to hatred, and I would no more of her. But at the same time I felt a moral obligation to retain the legal tie because I knew she would soon bring into the world a child I had every reason to believe was mine. That child I have always supported, although he lives with her, hardly knowing his father's face. She never sought a divorce, why I know not unless to spite me. The protection of my name was something to her no doubt, for I

believe she still goes by it in private life, having attained some slight operatic fame since those days. You would know her stage name, were I to mention it. Mine has been a lonely life, *alleliebste*, art alone has stood by me these twenty years; but one night not long since Fate brought me to you, and I knew at once my need was satisfied. Lenore! Lenore! you have not the heart to let my boyish imprudence interfere with our love! Why are you silent? Speak to me, my Lenore, and at least tell me that you pity me." He bowed his head on both hands, looking the misery his tones betrayed.

Eleonora put one hand on his head, murmuring, "Yes, dear, my pity is inexpressible — my heart aches for you — but what can I do?"

"Do!" he cried, drawing the hand and arm around his neck. "Do everything to make me happy! Live for me as I will live for you! Come with me. We will go from this cold, unemotional country where your beautiful voice has been ruined. I will take you to Paris! The voice will be restored! We will be happy! happy! If only for a day and that time spent together, what matters the rest?"

“ ‘La vie est brève !
Un peu despoir,
Un peu de rêve :
Et puis — bon soir.’ ”

Before we say *bon soir*, let us find together the dream of life, even if it be short.”

Trying to break away from him, Eleonora pleaded, “Do not tempt me! You are doing wrong! I have so little to live for — only Margaret now and my own self-respect, my voice and hope are gone. This fatal love for you has come to me unawares — ”

“My dearest,” he murmured.

“Why did you permit us to think you unmarried? Surely Rudolf does not know, or he would have told us. I am so alone in the world! and I *do* love you, Berthold! I do love you!”

Her self-pity permitted his renewal of his embrace.

“Think, *meine alleliebste*, of the life awaiting us! We would live in Paris, where we could be lost except to each other. We would hear the opera every night, and our happiness would bring back the voice. My position here I will sacrifice for you, and whenever you say we will go.”

"Hush," said Lenore, "some one is coming." She moved quickly to the window, adding, "Mr. Ulrich, I must get you to light the gas, for as delightful as this firelight and twilight are together, you and I must be at that last movement again or it will go badly Sunday night."

How inexplicable is the native deceit in human nature! A naturally frank and honest girl will assume with the necessary circumstances, and without training, the nonchalance at deception of an adept.

"What for is this?" called out Rudolf's hearty voice. "Sind Sie nicht zu hause? Lenore! Lenore! I heard your voice! Ah, now we have a light, and I see the distinguished Herr Ulrich who draws from his fiddle 'a tone full and pure, whose playing would be beyond criticism were it not for a suggestion of carelessness in his general technical work,' as quoted from 'The Daily Messenger.' How the critics do love our friend! How are you, old man? Been playing with our cantatrice, I see. How goes it?"

"My dear Rudolf," said Lenore, "how you do chatter! They used to say my tongue was

hung in the middle and wagged at both ends, but yours goes in the middle too. We were just finishing our practice, and I was urging Mr. Ulrich to stay to dinner, but he seems to think he must go." The look in her eyes belied her words, begging him to go.

"Yes, I really must," he said. "I have tired Miss Dean all out with the accompanying. She looks done up. Then, too, I have an engagement immediately after seven down town. Come along, Rudolf, see me to the door; I must hear your latest views upon questions communistic."

When Eleonora thought the two men had gone, she heard Ulrich's voice calling in the hall, "I must go back one moment; I have left all of my music."

He returned, took the music, and in passing her chair said, "Come to the Public Garden tomorrow afternoon at two. I must talk to you immediately. Come for my sake."

She made no sign of assent or dissent, but when the time he had appointed arrived she was at the place of meeting.

CHAPTER VIII

NOT without having passed hours of agonized self-argument did Eleonora keep that appointment. Passion and self-pity joined sides against self-respect and all preconceived codes of right. The devil certainly must be a lawyer by profession, for his arguments are persuasive and seemingly reasonable. He said: "Why not go with this man you love? He is not really married, for marriage is a union of hearts — besides, they have not seen each other for years. What do you care for the world and its opinion? Most of the people in it are doing or have done *sub rosa* something much worse."

Self-respect replied: "Do not listen. Do you know what you would be to this man? you — Eleonora Dean? He will say you could never be that because he looks upon you as his wife; but remember that marriage is a legalized institution for the protection of society



and innocent children, and as long as this fact remains, mortals must abide by the conditions or take the consequences."

"Bah," said the devil, "what nonsense! Marriages are made in heaven," with a leer. "Remember the Oriental has a harem of wives according to the laws of his country. If there is a moral right in your laws how about his? Your relation with your lover would be more pure than that of the majority of men and women who live legally married without love."

Conscience spoke up: "Love! Do you call it that when a man will degrade a woman in the eyes of the world, no matter how faulty that world and its opinions may be? The first and highest element of love is self-sacrifice. The man who tempts a girl in this way feels only passion, the lowest and most ephemeral of emotions."

"How you do talk!" said the devil. "It is a weak love that does not feel the necessity of possessing the beloved object. You will be the selfish one if you give him up, for his life has been lonely and unhappy: surely you can sacrifice yourself, throwing by your companionship a gleam of light into a clouded existence. Sac-

rifice yourself for the man you love. Your voice has failed you — what else is there in life for you?"

With this hot contention greatly elaborated going on in her brain, Eleonora, against her judgment but drawn by a magnetism all powerful, left the house the following afternoon to take a walk through the soft, motherly June air in hope of gaining strength and a clearer perception of right. Until she arrived at the Public Garden she kept declaring to herself that she would *not* meet him there. The youthful green of the foliage was refreshing. The spring flowers in the Garden whispered together over their floral love affairs, — at least we judge that to be their invariable topic, for ever since the spring has enticed nature's beauty spots to the surface it has been reported that at this time of year even a young man's fancy is lightly led about by Cupid. What more or less could be expected of the flowers, whose affairs of the heart I suspect of being flippant! Perhaps the deep red rose lives tragedies, but surely the crocus takes her heart affairs right gaily.

Eleonora walked slowly about along the different paths, more to see if he would appear

than with the intention of meeting him, she told herself, coquetting with her conscience. Presently she saw his tall figure advancing towards her with the long strides known familiarly in their household as "Ulrich's locomotives." She stepped behind a high flowering shrub, permitting him to pass by a few steps her coign of vantage. She called gently, "Ah! *mein Herr!* So you do not know your friends."

The strongest effort of her moral nature could not chain her tongue, thus permitting him to pass her by and perhaps as a consequence out of her life.

He turned quickly, exclaiming, "Ah, you are there, my Titian-haired lady?"

"You are indeed a clever man," she rejoined. "Titian! Is there another word in any language so direct a guide-post to a red-headed woman's heart?"

She joined him, and they strolled along together.

"If I have hit upon the high road to my gold mine my poor English has stood me in good stead."

A shadow fell upon her eyes, and she said thoughtfully, "Now I understand why your

English is so good. You said your — no, I cannot say the word — Mrs. Ulrich is English of course."

"Leave her out of the question and our life just for to-day, my Lenore," he begged.

"I will, Berthold; we will live in Arcadia for a few hours. Soon the end must come, but I am a weak enough woman to want just this little bit of your life for my own. Shall we walk out Beacon street?"

"If you are willing, my scheme is to take the train out to a place on the river which the men have told me about. There we can get a boat and row about in Paradise, — at least that will be my name for any country we traverse together."

"You are good at pretty speeches, Monsieur le Serpent," Lenore responded with a laugh. "Just this once I will go and take one look at the Fruit." Then with one of her swift changes of expression she continued, "How can I be frivolous? I do not understand myself, but it has been so long since I have felt young or happy, that I must let myself go, giving vent to this sunshine of your creation."

"Do not tempt me to take you in my arms here in the street. We will go where we can

talk unobserved — come. I have had much difficulty in getting this free afternoon, and we must make the best of it."

And so they permitted their tongues to run, lubricated with the happiness superinduced by the feeling they called love, which, after all, was a poor imitation, for, bereft of the overpowering element of personal magnetism there was little true affinity between these two. Ulrich did and said many things positively repulsive to Eleonora's refinement of nature; but he held her against her will by all the fascinations of a cosmopolitan man of strongly attractive personality possessed of considerable tact in his management of the cloven foot. The charms of that day could never be erased from Eleonora's remembrance, not even by better, more truly happy days, because the first glance at one's own power of loving is charged with not alone the rapture but also the newness of the emotion. It is like going abroad from our native heath for the first time. At the second trip over the same ground we know what to expect, but notwithstanding our more intelligent appreciation of each scene we never again experience precisely the first glow.

That "one glance at the Fruit" proved too much for Eleonora's resolve to end their acquaintance after that afternoon. Human nature is eternally true to itself. During this month of June Ulrich and Eleonora had frequent clandestine meetings, which they excused on the plea of the multitude of people always to be met at Mrs. Koehne's home. Eleonora continued the fight for the supremacy of her better self, but so far she had come out worsted, consoling herself with, "I am doing no one a wrong. The wife would be no better off had we never met, and he can never persuade me to give myself up to him and go to Paris. I am safe — I *must* have some happiness or I shall go mad."

Thus argued the poor, lonely child, not realizing who it was being injured by her way of life, that wrong-doing is stronger in its reactionary effects than in any other.

Little Margaret said one day, using the childish abbreviation of her sister's name, "Nolie, don't you love Madge any more? You act so queer! You never used to be cross with me, even when you did with other people. Now you're looking up at the sky most of the time. Do you see mansions up there? Rent one for

me if you do, for I'd just suit one." The child was balancing on the arm of Eleonora's chair with her own arm across the back. Eleonora looked up in surprise.

"Cross to you, Madge!" she said; "am I really that? I don't mean to be, dear, but sister has so much to worry her. We are not very rich, you know, and my voice will not sing any more, so that I can't make all that money we used to talk about."

"*I* don't care for money—I've got you, Nolie," stoutly declared the child. "I guess we won't starve, and I'll make a lot myself when I grow up."

She put the balancing arm around Eleonora's head, drawing it against her true little heart. The demonstration proved too much for Eleonora's self-control, which had been severely tried of late. The tears would come, and she cried through her sobs, —

"I will do right! I will do right! For your sake, Margaret! I could not disgrace you! You must make sister good, Madge."

"Good!" protested Margaret, "well, I guess you're good enough; I'd like to see the person who says you are n't! I'd chew his ear!"

"Mercy! Madge, where do you get such language? I must take you in hand," exclaimed Eleonora, smiling through her tears.

"Oh, we all say that at school," replied the infant consoler. "I'm the crack pupil in language. Did n't I get a prize for a child's essay in a newspaper last month?"

"Then I recommend your talking some of the English you write. But we won't quarrel over it. I'll let you fix my hair any way you like. You can play hair-dresser for just a half hour before bed-time."

During the allotted half hour, Eleonora sat thinking under the new and penetrating light cast upon the situation by the unconscious child, towards whom her duty, during this time of trial, had been obscured by selfish self-pity.

CHAPTER IX

THE next day came a note from Ulrich, saying : —

“Come, *meine Allgeliebste*, to my teaching-room this afternoon at four. You will be taken for a pupil. I must see you alone. If you truly love me, you will come to

Your own

BERTHOLD.

Long did Eleonora urge herself not to go, but that last sentence was the *coup de grace* of Satan, who doubtless chuckled over its enticing sophistry. She arrived with the hour, only being there, as she told herself, for the purpose of making him understand how entirely their relations must end.

Ulrich took her in his arms, saying, “I was sure of you, dearest, but I was tempted to make this trial of your love for me ;” and his

voice, even more than was usual, sounded caressing and persuasive. She attempted to free herself, saying hurriedly, "I have come to tell you that I am going away, — that all this must end."

"Going away! of course, we are going together to Paris just as soon as you say the word. The end! It is but the beautiful beginning of a dream of eternal happiness!" and he kissed first one of her hands, then the other, on palm and back and fingers, then placing both of her arms about his neck, continued, "I must know to-day when we are to start because of money arrangements and our passage. I can wait no longer! you are the bride of my heart, my soul! You belong to me, and I must take my own!"

"Berthold! Berthold! Have you no mercy for me? Do you never think of what such a life means for me in the end, and the disgrace we would bring down upon our friends if we were to go?"

"Our friends! They will survive. They are not responsible for your actions. A week's sensation! — then we are forgotten! Remember, my love,

“‘La vie est brève;
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve,
Et puis — bon soir.’

What difference will it make a hundred years hence what we do now? ‘Rejoice and be merry, for to-morrow you die.’ That is the true philosophy! And then I have had so little happiness,—not even the small share apportioned to the majority. You are to be my sunlight! my inspiration! My violin will speak to the world as it never has before. You will make it tell of great and beautiful things.”

“Do you believe what you say, Berthold?” asked Eleonora, sadly.

“Can you doubt me, *mein Liebling*? Will I not be giving up all of my worldly prospects here for you? We must bring back the voice and set the world afire with your fame as a great opera singer. Jenny Lind lost her voice and regained it, as will you. I, yes I, will make you the ideal Juliette, Elsa, Isolde! We will study together and astonish the world.”

“Have pity on me, Berthold. I cannot, *cannot* do what I know is wrong!” and she knelt

down beside the couch on which they were sitting, leaning her head down on one arm, shaking from head to foot from a supreme attempt at self-control.

He threw himself at full length on the couch, putting his face close to hers, as she knelt, murmuring, "I love you! I love you! Don't you understand? There is no life without you. Come, Lenore, come with me." Lifting her head he laid her cheek against his own, and holding her close, they remained silent.

Presently she said almost inaudibly, "Berthold, I suppose I am a bad woman because this moment I am happy."

"My Lenore is an angel. Love is the great purifier. You could not sing before you loved, — you did not feel — the artist must *feel*, to be great. This is heaven. Fancy a lifetime of such joy! You are mine! You are mine, my beauty!" This violence of passion began to grate upon the reserve and refinement of the descendant of Puritans, and with a sudden feeling of revulsion, she exclaimed, "Berthold!" Seeing that he had been carried too far, he loosened his clasp, saying humbly, "Forgive, dearest, I am a bear, but all because I love you

so. Tell me, when shall we go, Lenore, to-morrow? on Saturday?"

"I am going now," she said, quietly.

"No, do not, *mein kind*, stay with me yet awhile."

"Say good-bye, Berthold, if you wish. It is for the last time."

"What does this mean, Lenore? You said you would go with me! Will you break your promise?"

"I am going," she said, with a hard, strained look about her eyes and mouth, as she arose to her feet and stood erect before him.

"You do not love me then, Lenore. You have been playing with me. I have given you all a man can give, and you calmly say good-bye as though we had met yesterday. Bah! you American women are cold, heartless creatures!" He sat down, looking gloomily out of the window. Eleonora walked over, and standing beside him, said, "Yes, I love you, Berthold, but I love my self-respect more. Perhaps I am selfish, I cannot tell; nor can I explain, if you do not understand. One last good-bye, dear."

He sullenly muttered, "You do not care for

me. Or perhaps you think this fine reserve enhancing to your charms!"

"If you wish to kill my love, you are taking the surest way," Eleonora replied, stung by the commonness of his retort.

"Once more, Lenore, I ask if you are coming with me to Paris?"

She held out both hands, replying, "Say good-bye. You know I am not going away with you."

He gave no notice to the hands or words, but she went on: "You and I have been Lotus-eating, but the time has come for us to part. If I have done wrong, have tempted you beyond your strength, I ask forgiveness. Do you think this is easy for me, Berthold? You have been my first ideal! the Knight, the Tristan of my existence, and now you will not even say good-bye! If I could be your wife do you think I would hesitate? As little as I care to marry, I would marry you, were it possible. Will you not even look at me? Must I go without one word? Look up! Look up, Berthold! Oh, you are cruel!" She moved towards the door slowly step by step, lingeringly. With her hand on the door knob, she called back once again,

"Good-bye." Springing to his feet he crossed the room, caught her fiercely in his arms, crying, "You are mine, *mine*, I tell you. Go now, but you will come back! You will come back! Go! go!" and he fairly pushed her out of the door, closing and locking it behind her.

She walked on and on, unconscious of the streets or the direction in which they were taking her. Slowly the dazed mental condition induced by excess of emotion passed away, and she realized her long distance from home. Her first intelligent thought was, "I must go away to some place. I cannot trust myself under his influence. Like all cowards, I must fly from danger."

During the walk home, she decided upon her course. That night Eleonora made some excuse to bid Mrs. Koehne and Frieda an especially affectionate good-night, talking long with Rudolf in front of the dying fire before she tried to sleep. Once in her own room, she packed her belongings, and the next day, when Mrs. Koehne returned to lunch after a busy morning spent in presiding at a board meeting, she found this letter: —

MEINE MUTTER KOEHNE, — Knowing your heart, I feel that you will forgive me for leaving you without a word of good-bye. I had to go. I love Berthold Ulrich, and he is a married man. My guilt is not in loving him, but in having encouraged his love for me after he told me of his ties. When the inevitable hour of temptation came yesterday, I succeeded in resisting, but I am not sufficiently sure of myself to remain within reach of its repetition. Oh, my second mother ! what a weak woman I have been ! As a girl, in reading or thinking about similar cases, I was bitterly lacking in charity for people so tempted ; *now* I know what temptation means, and that I am no better than the majority. Do not blame him. He did not intentionally keep his marriage a secret from us ; he thought we knew. I am going away — going to Europe, even if I must use the principal of my means to carry out my plans. The doctor says the sea voyage and a summer's rest would restore my voice — but I have little hope. Keep Margaret for me until I am ready to sail, and please send on to me here the trunk marked "to be sent." Rudolf, I know, will secure my passage from New York, and take Margaret there to meet me next week ; or, if he cannot get away, let her come to me here. You will understand that Mr. Ulrich must not be told of my whereabouts. The battle has been almost beyond my

strength. You must save me from another struggle. There is not much left for me in life. Alas ! alas ! If my art were not lost to me ! But I must make this last venture. I shall go to the Dorseys, in Surrey, for a while, as they have long urged me to do, and await the next turning of fate. I will live for my little sister, her love and yours being the best things in life for me. I can hardly tell you how much you have been to me, *kleine Mutter*. I seem to be stunned. I am too filled with self-pity to be of any use in the world yet awhile. Now, good-bye, dear. Good-bye ! good-bye to you all. I can hardly write ; saying good-bye has brought the tears for the first time.

The unworthy one you love,

ELEONORA.

Mrs. Koehne read the letter through rapidly, hardly grasping more than the main unfortunate facts. She turned to Rudolf, who sat reading, saying, "Did you know that man was married?"

"What man, mother?"

"Ulrich."

"Married ! why, no, he never mentioned that fact to me."

"You certainly saw that he was making love to Eleonora."

"Yes," he replied quietly, "I saw that."

"Just read that letter! Lenore has gone!"

"Gone where?"

"Read, and you will see."

He read, using mighty efforts at self-control, as he comprehended the situation.

"I must follow her!" he exclaimed.

"No, you are not the one to go. I shall start by the next train. My poor Lenore! My poor child! If I were a man, I'd shoot him down without hesitation!"

"Do you wish me to do that, mother?" asked Rudolf, with such marked constraint in his voice that she glanced directly at his face, conscious for the first time of its drawn, haggard look. Without noticing his question, she knelt down beside his chair, took his head in her arms, and drawing it down to her shoulder, cried, "You, too, my son! I have been blind! I should have sent her away long ago, had I known!"

"But, my mother," he replied, "I was happy in her presence. I knew her love for me was but sisterly. My greatest pleasure in life has been the moulding of her art instinct. Hers is a fine nature, a truth never better exemplified than by this sad experience. She has wrestled

with temptation and conquered. She is an uncommonly strong woman, of great force, and I believe in her future." After a moment's silence, he continued: "I am happier in loving her in this way than in caring for another woman who loved me, because, being a foolish idealist, as you have said yourself, it is perhaps the ideal Lenore I worship, not the real woman. I am not to be pitied, mother, while I have you." He felt his mother's tears roll down upon his own face. Putting up one hand to touch her hair, he went on: "You must not do that, *meine Mutter*. We must decide what is best to do about Eleonora."

Mother and son talked over the situation at length, finally deciding it to be best for Mrs. Koehne to follow Eleonora, as she had first suggested, and, after talking with the girl, to write Rudolf what move to make concerning Margaret.

That same night Ulrich called at the house, asking for Miss Dean at the door. Rudolf went down to see him. Ulrich called out, "Wie geht's? How do you find yourself, old man?"

Rudolf replied, "Ziemlich gut! but I wish to say that Miss Dean has gone away."

"Indeed! When will she be back?" asked Ulrich, startled out of his usual nonchalance of manner by the suddenness of the news.

"She will not come back at all. She sails for England next week."

"The devil she does!" broke from Ulrich. "Is she going alone?"

"No, she takes Margaret. Look here, Ulrich, you and I have been friends. I brought you here, and feel somewhat responsible for what has happened; but even then it is hard luck to talk to a man about his private affairs and actions. You'll understand when I tell you Lenore has gone away, out of the city, leaving a pitiful enough note telling of her relations with you, and asking us not to let you know her whereabouts. It is n't my place to judge any man, but if you meant to conceal your marriage, you're a worse man than I take you to be." He stopped for a reply, but Ulrich sat silent, looking sullenly at the floor. "Mind I am not calling you to account, because I have not the right," Rudolf continued; "but I should like to know, considering our friendship, whether you are an unfortunate man or an evil-intentioned one."

"Oh, I'm bad enough to suit anybody," answered Ulrich, "but in this case I'm better than I look. I took for granted you knew of my delightful matrimonial venture. Mademoiselle Blancier, the opera singer, is my beautiful spouse. But the women are all about on a par after all. I thought this Eleonora Dean above the common herd, but when it comes to sacrificing themselves for a man, bah! — then their love flies out of the window. If she thinks I will run after her begging for her favors, she is mistaken. There are too many women in the world for me to use myself up over one." Rising, he continued, "Well, I'll go along, admitting that I have been made a pretty fool of. Can you let me have a match?"

"You're not the man I took you for, Ulrich," said Rudolf, automatically handing him a match.

"No?" said Ulrich, with the cigar between his teeth as he lit it. "Then I've given you a surprise — a pleasant one, I hope. Good-night. See you at rehearsal," and he went out into the night.

"I came mighty near making an ass of myself over that girl," he pondered, as he walked towards his own quarters with his habitual air

of keenest satisfaction in a cigar. "Perhaps she has done me a good turn after all, for I'm making a good thing out of it here, and her voice might never have come back. Ah! but she is a splendid creature, *ma belle* Lenore, and I never thought so much of any other woman — no? Well, perhaps Valerie Damien in Paris interested me as much. But about this one there was something spiritual, high, far up above me, keeping me alert for a glimpse of the mountain tops of woman's morality — if there is such a thing. I've done her good, too, — given her the *grande passion* she needed to make her a great singer. Perhaps I've done a good turn for Art, my poor mistress, who is growing old and decrepit for lack of some new blood. Anyway, the affair has rubbed off the edge of my *ennui* during the past winter. Who knows! Perhaps we shall meet again, my copper-haired love." And he went upstairs to his room, singing softly to a melody of his own making, —

"La vie est brève,
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve,
Et puis — bon soir."

CHAPTER X

As Eleonora came down the Copsham road leading from the English village of Brockner to the pine forest, the bluebells sang "True is my heart," and the heather nestled in family groups, chanting, "God made the beautiful days! We are glad to be! glad to be!" while the sunbeams danced about the green branches of the trees, clasping hands overhead and proclaiming, "We are children of Light! children of Light!"

The green of the earth, the blue of the sky, and the gold of the sun made the harmonious accompaniment in colors to the birds' singing of divine melodies aloft in the trees. The southwest breezes carried the odor of the pines to the woman breathing in with health's message the glory of a perfect day. A wagon track struck in from the right hand of the road, winding through the heart of the pine wood. Eleonora walked for ten minutes or so along this

path, then threw herself down on a yielding bed of pine needles guarded by the dignified "sentinels of the forest," seemingly as isolated from the clamor and smoke of London as though she had been an Indian maiden, before civilization had mutilated the picturesqueness of the western hemisphere. All about her hung the silence which speaks many languages. Occasionally a squirrel would scamper up the trunk of a tree, running on into a headlong exhibition of rural gymnastics out at the extreme end of a pine bough.

The wind sighed its sympathy, for it, too, was resting. Eleonora fancied she saw Robin Hood or some other knight of the Greenwood, down an avenue of pines. If her imagination played her not false, some unusual delicacy kept him afar off, and she was left to the companionship of Nature's children and her own thoughts, which formed hazily into half-spoken words running in this wise: "Here I would stop living and begin over again. Robert Browning must have sat right here when he said: —

"My soul smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll,
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.

What need to strive with life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.'

Here life seems not awry! Ah! let me lie and forget how ugly the world can be battered and scarred with sin and sorrow. Now I will imagine myself a lady fair of ye ancient days in distress, when lo! up rides Arthur or Lancelot or Galahad or Siegfried to deliver me from—what? Myself? Yes—my very worst enemy." Then she lay in dreamy content, pretending expectancy of the knight, her bright hair unbound and wrapping her all around.

"Mother Earth, your bosom is most comforting," she apostrophized. "Whisper me some of Nature's beautiful secrets—you must be in her confidence. Ah! you have heard about the tattling reeds, and fear frail woman. I like your wisdom. Secrets grow in the telling even more nowadays than of yore. But I should like to know what this is inside of me eternally thinking, and if it will keep on when this hand I can touch goes back to you. But I am happy! happy! for I have my voice once more." Raising herself to a sitting posture, she began to sing the theme of a Beethoven Larghetto which

had always expressed content for her; then fastening up her hair into its usual loose knot, she walked down the lonely path, pouring out on a single vowel the dignified religious melody. She could not hear her own footsteps on the bed of pine needles over which she walked. It was the feeling of something human near, not the sound, that made her turn to see a man on horseback reining in his steed so that she might not be disturbed in her possession of the rural pathway.

Her surprise fastened her to the spot momentarily, while she stood staring "quite as the missing link would take its first look at a locomotive," she told Frieda Koehne afterward in writing about the incident. Then she smiled, and, with her ordinary impetuosity, exclaimed: "Are you King Arthur or Launcelot?"

"Whichever you prefer, Fair Lady," replied the man, seeming highly amused, although he made heroic efforts to appear grave and self-contained.

"I have no preference in the matter," said Eleonora. "I asked from curiosity, for I was hoping for a mediæval hero to fit in with the surroundings. I am glad you came, for you

quite complete the *mise en scène* of the pine forest."

"Then, if I add to the general effect, I will not reveal how little of a hero I am in truth."

"No, don't; you must hurry on lest I might become disillusioned," said Eleonora, stepping aside for him to pass, as she began faintly to realize the singular freedom of her first ejaculation.

"Not until you tell me which you are, Guinevere or sad Elaine," he replied, leaning slightly towards her from the saddle.

"Oh, I am a wood nymph. I only appear once to mankind during my lifetime," she answered, taking the path in retreat from him.

"Then my life has been worth the living, considering such a privilege," he said to the retreating figure.

She looked back, saying, "Farewell, King Arthur," and passed around a bend of the road out of range of his vision. For several days she expected to meet the same equestrian on the roads; failing to do so, and hearing nothing of him in the neighborhood, she dismissed him from her thoughts with a laugh, although he would always hold a place in her recollection of that exceptionally beautiful day.

The summer in Surrey among the hedges, pine-trees, sunshine, sudden showers, clotted cream, and happy friendships restored Eleonora's naturally healthy tenor of thought and feeling, chasing away her growing morbid views of life. No environment would erase the effect upon her character of the experience through which she had recently passed.

In many respects the trial by fire had developed her strength in a manner similar to the increased evidences of civilization following the footsteps of war.

Experience is a creator of character poise. She was learning to think, and to appreciate the value of both mental and moral balance. The artist's ambition, relegated to the background of her life for a short period, made a strong rebound with the return of her reasoning faculties, which even in the most conventional affair of the heart are set pretty well aside for the time being.

Consequently, when she went up to London for a winter's study with a truly great singing-master, her voice was in a way to reassert its natural conditions. Then, too, she had been studying tone production from the birds in

Surrey, than which no more perfect exemplars of the early Italian way of singing could be found.

After some months, she realized herself in full possession of her most precious gift. Naturally, her gratitude to the fine friend she had made in the London singing-master broke out at frequent intervals by way of letters and speech. During the winter she wrote to Frieda Koehne in this wise: —

Imagine the feeling of the wood bird turned out for a warble among his native trees, after having been confined in a cage only long enough to find it irksome and not a sufficient time to render him used to restraint! I am alive again! Think of it, Frieda! Can you realize that I have my voice again? Some days I stop singing, wondering if it is magic that makes the tone pour out of the place which a year ago would give no response.

I want to sing all day and compete with the roosters at night, — for I am still humble enough not to say nightingales, although I trust your comprehension to tell you which feathered rival I mean.

I begin to understand the precise meaning of your lamentations over the dearth of *bon camaraderie* among musicians in America. No doubt if I had been fortunate enough to have studied singing with

some one more suited to my needs, I could have learned to sing as well in Boston as over here, but I never could have felt the same inspiration there. Although London is not Germany, still the workers here seem to pursue *die Kunst* somewhat *con amore*, getting more in the long run out of life than I had thought possible. Mr. Severance and his dear wife are uncommonly good to me socially, not to speak of his innumerable professional kindnesses.

Next month I make my drawing-room début at Lady Seldon's — as Mr. Severance says, "Just to see how the backbone will act when exposed to fire again." He is an amusingly clever man who says what he pleases, where and when he pleases, served up with a wicked expression in one eye (yes — just the one) which I tell him he caught from Monsieur Satan the last time they communed, at which impudence he chuckles until I begin to think myself immensely amusing.

Mrs. Severance invites me there sometimes to dine on her day at home, affording me a great opportunity to meet and mingle with interesting people. One very bad man said to me not long since, "Commend me to a gathering of people who 'do things' for great I's and greater lies by the yard." But he was a little out of it himself, and only referred to the bad habit we all fall into of obtruding our ego

when we have hitched it up to ambition and success. At the Severances this feature is expelled as nearly as possible, for the tactful hostess keeps the people all so busy in showing off what they can do, or thinking about their turn coming, that they give over advertising their wares. That sort of thing is not common among the really great, whose work speaks for itself; only the small fry sputter.

I wish you were here to bolster me up against the trial of singing in public for the first time since my vocal disablement! my feeling resembles that of a man bereft of his leg for a time. If the extremity were replaced, its usefulness would hardly compensate for the trouble of getting acquainted again. But with Hope by my side again I shall conquer Success. Severance encourages me to attempt grand opera, as he pronounces the voice a dramatic soprano, and within the past month I have begun to feel my possibilities in that direction, for something else besides the voice has come to me, — a certain intensity and broadness of interpretation not part of me until of late.

Margaret is in school, and she does turn out the quaintest, most original little essays on all subjects. The child seems possessed to write. Fancy Midget a prospective authoress! It makes me feel old! We have a little suite and go out for dinner, usually getting our own breakfast and lunch, which I find is

a cheaper way to live than in lodgings. When I begin to make money again we shall live in better style — just now Bloomsbury must suffice.

Ego sticks out at every turning of this letter, but I know my Koehne family will wish to hear about us and our doings. The next time I'll tell more about the people I know, and the life generally, which is fascinating. Even after many months of familiarity with things English, I still live among kings and queens, knights and ladies, when I poke around the Drury Lane neighborhood, depopulating it of the existing human scum to make way for my romantic spooks. *Die Mutter* must know that I am her own Eleonora, once more out of the grasp of shadows, trying to keep my taper burning, but the red-headed temper still burns the brightest — my wings grow so slowly. Can't you send me some feathers of Patience, Endurance, and general Good Behavior to glue on to my scanty growth? My time is too full to admit of frequent letters, but when I get a free evening I say, "now, Lenore, you will have a good time with your best friends," and I write long enough at a sitting to compensate for infrequency. Look out for a vocal bomb named Eleonora Dean, to be thrown at the world after two more years of hard labor here and in Paris.

Meantime I am yours always,

The Bomb, E. D.

The success of the drawing-room engagement referred to in this letter secured for Eleonora many others during the London season, and several public appearances in concert. After the first attempt her extreme nervousness wore off, leaving her the confidence in her personal power requisite to the entire possession of an audience by the singer. The following summer she and Margaret spent at a quiet place by the sea, preparatory to the plunge into Parisian study for grand opera.

At the present day operatic triumphs can most surely be attained by Parisian coaching leading up to a Parisian début, for influence is as potent in connection with the Grand Opera in Paris as it is in all walks of life.

CHAPTER XI

THE next winter in Paris resulted in frequent letters to Eleonora's Boston friends, and in vocal achievements surpassing even her own expectations. At Christmas time she wrote Frieda:

FRIEDA, my friend of the heart, as they say over here, — To think that you know the exquisite feeling of motherhood! When I could not be at your wedding I assured myself that I should be on hand if a dear little child ever arrived to you, for I never have seen a tiny bit of humanity newly introduced to its woes, and, wishing a good impression, I have waited to see yours: now all I can do is to send my blessing wrapped up in a small bundle Santa Claus will leave for you.

As for yours humbly — I study and study, then rest and study again *de capo*. As well as my technical work with the voice and study of my rôles, I give two hours daily to French and take a lesson in dramatic action from Bernier, then do some piano

work and general reading besides my singing lessons. Amateurs cannot even imagine the grind through which singers go before singing greatly. My life is narrow in a way, because, as you know, a vocal student becomes of necessity all voice, and the pianist all piano, the violinist all violin. Some of my best lessons come from listening to the artists at the Opera. When I hear Monsieur Le Grange do some of the great rôles I feel that to sing with the hero of modern song would make me almost too happy. I believe I should die of joy ! Madame says I shall do it year after next, but it sounds like some beautiful yet impossible tale to my ears. To sing Elsa to his Lohengrin ! Juliette to his Romeo ! It takes away my breath ! If I ever am great these will be my chief rôles. I feel them more than the others of my repertoire.

The Boston life seems so far away. Nothing is real but art and the artificial nowadays. I live in the lives of operatic heroines by day and dream them by night. The misadventures of my life seem fading into distance like the dangerous, rocky beach as one rows out to sea in a small boat. If my little bark overtakes the ship of Triumph, how almost disproportionately great will be the compensation. The stability of my voice is a source of surprise, but Bernier says he has known many similar cases of complete restoration by proper use of the vocal organs,

even when the voice has been forced unbearably. If it had not been for that unfortunate love-affair I might never have summoned the courage to cross the seas and try for my higher destiny, which illustrates the good to be found in evil, *nicht wahr?* The *grande passion* may make great singers, as I have heard said, but it leaves a very bitter taste in the mouth. Passion is a mirage of the soul leading one to the deserts of desolation. There must be another sort of love, the kind I presume you feel for your husband.

If Ulrich had loved me in the best sense of that word he would not have done and said many of the things I recall to mind now that I *think* where he is concerned, no longer moving with eyes on the mirage.

But *requiescat in pace* is what we must wish him. My heart must be indeed hard that I cannot grieve over his death. Poor Berthold! If I could realize I am sure the tears would flow for you! But he has been dead to me ever since I left your house.

The two kinds of attraction between men and women are, no doubt, as natural as the growth of the weed and the wood violet side by side. I think I should prefer the latter if my heart could ever work again, but love seems to be something apart from my life excepting as I sing it into my operatic rôles.

Existence is not so agreeably sauced here as in London by contact with interesting people, because

madame demands from me the life of a comparative recluse.

The opera and her salon musicals once a month are my only diversions. At the latter, I have been highly amused by a little French count of uncertain years who has done me the honor to fall in love with me and to propose through madame for my hand. He is as poor as Job's turkey, and I am sceptical enough to wonder if his love is not generated by his belief in my future as a money-making *prima donna*. Madame cannot make him understand that there is one American girl, at least, who would refuse a title, and he is immensely funny in his protestations. He insists upon speaking English to me, seeming to take for granted my ignorance of French, no matter how I may plume myself upon my Parisian accent.

The other night he approached with all the dignity possible in such a battered relic of the flesh-pots of Egypt, moving towards me in minuet fashion.

"Permit me to wish Miss a handsome evening." I thanked him, but did not succeed in keeping my laughter entirely in my sleeve, for he asked with a gesture of despair, "You make a smile at my English, Miss Dean? I fear it to you is irksome, but I do combat with the dictionary each day in the hope of him better to make."

I assured him his improvement was wonderful,

whereupon he exclaimed: "With so great a heart for the failings of me, dear miss, will you not have a piece little for myself? You me desolate, *mademoiselle*, I live not! I languish because of you! *Mon désir est —*" and he broke into such vehement French expostulations in regard to his desires and my heart of stone that I was compelled to head him off by excusing myself and hurrying away to madame.

I shall not bore you with my affectional conquests excepting when they are amusing, as in the case of this old chap. There is one young New York painter who is really a great friend of mine. He is, of course, poor and unknown, but filled with the spark if he only can find means to ignite the world with it.

At rare intervals madame takes me with her to some of the famous studios, but not often enough for me to get at the artist life as I should like to do.

You see, when she takes a singer into training she demands this sort of obedience to her wishes; otherwise she refuses to guarantee the *début* which her influence secures. Margaret and I are chaperoned wherever we go as though we were maidens just out of the convent,—which usually amuses me, but sometimes the American in me rebels against such espionage. Margaret begins to chatter in French. She is becoming quite companionable to me, being more anxious for my success than even I am.

Now, dear, I shall look forward with eagerness to the next word from you concerning the heir to the Koehne talents. Tell me every little bit of family news, for you people and my English friends, the Dorseys, are my only ties to domesticity. Once in a while I feel like a stray cat bereft of family moorings, but the sensation is invariably a forerunner of indigestion — by nature I am an arrant Bohemian.

Tell Rudolf I shall expect him to come over upon the occasion of my *début* — I can hardly write the word, it sets my heart to beating this far off. What if I should fail, Frieda, after so many years of struggle ! But I shall not ! “ Brutus is himself again ! ” The word “ fail ” no longer belongs to my vocabulary.

With Christmas greetings and more love than I can express for all of my dear ones, including the new one,

I am your red-headed, egotistical,

LENORE.

Many letters passed from friend to friend between the foregoing and the following ; but as they were merely variations on pretty much the same themes we will only read the one from Lenore to Frieda, written the week before the *début* at the Grand Opera, which distinction had been brought about by the influence of her

teacher, supported by the wonders of a voice which had developed beyond recognition since the days, now five years back, when "the girl from the provinces" had gone to Boston to study singing, the height of her ambition at that time being a church choir position.

FRIEDA DEAR [this letter ran], why are you not here to pluck up my courage for me? I am so alone! One week from to-night, and fate will have done its best—or worst—for me! Romeo et Juliette with your Lenore cast as the girl-lover and wife! The advertising posters confront and startle me so that I have to read them over and over again to make sure that I am not dreaming. Am *I* really the "Mademoiselle Eleonora Dean, pupil of Madame —, whose unexcelled voice and marvellous dramatic ability promise a brilliant début"?

Well-a-day! Time travels at divers paces with divers persons, and with me he has wrought changes almost miraculous. If the benevolent scythesman would mow down some of my fears I should be greatly indebted.

You can hardly imagine what help Monsieur Le Grange has been to me since my rehearsals to his Romeo began. I think I wrote you a long time ago that the distinction of singing with him would bring

me to a joyful grave. But every one is fitted to his honors as to his burdens, for I find myself bearing monsieur's society professionally and socially without an undue show of awe or humility on my part. The truth is that great people are more interesting in the abstract or perspective, so to speak. A great man gives most of his greatness to the world through the medium of his achievements, after which he is apt to relax into (in many cases) quite an ordinary being, not nearly so attractive as many of the cosmopolitan dilettanti one meets—men and women of many-sided culture with clever brains and tongues ever on the alert to make a good impression. The genius bears about him a conspicuous footnote referring hero worshippers to the great things he can do. All of this does not mean that Monsieur Le Grange falls short of my anticipations; to the contrary, I find him a better, finer man than I had hoped for, but less of a hero, resulting in additional respect on my part and a beautiful interest in my maiden efforts on his, worthy of the generous, exalted artist everybody knows him to be. His encouragement during these fearful days immediately preceding the appearance is more to me than any other help offered. My artistic fear is that I am too old and world-hardened to express to an audience the girlish passion of a hot-blooded Italian maid. Strange to

say, after all my vocal troubles my fears are not of my vocalization, but of my acting — my dramatic interpretation of the part. Margaret feels for me (the dear child !), not *with* me ; we are at the antipodes emotionally. Her brain is analytical beyond everything else. I encourage her to write professionally, and the next time we go to London I hope to meet an editor, a friend of the Dorseys, for the purpose of consulting him about the best training for her in that field of work. They say this editor is an uncommonly clever man, who has done great things in journalism for a man not yet middle-aged.

Soon I hope to be making money again, for the child's sake if not for my own. We have lived almost meagrely in Paris, but Margaret (fancy her sixteen years old !) must have more comforts and see more of the kind of people who will encourage and inspire her tendencies.

This writing to you, *meine alleliebste* Frieda, quiets my nerves as your own gentle spirit used to do. Pray for me, dear — pray if you can ! I wish I could for myself, but that comforting belief in a personal God who would make or mar my success in one evening, regardless of my years of preparatory labor, is impossible to me. I *do* believe in the wonderful Creator who laid down certain great principles in the beginning, resulting, as far as I am concerned, in my

possession by inheritance of certain gifts, and the power of developing them. But the human God to whom I see the women in Saint Sulpice praying I can neither reason into being, nor feel emotionally as they do. My sorrows have shown me the good in evil, for I realize my own mental and moral development by means of the wrongs I have resisted or repented, therefore I am filled with a comprehension of the Maker's chief attributes, Goodness and Right — but next Tuesday night I must rely upon myself. I presume I should survive a failure, as others have done before me, but at present I feel defeat of my ambition would shorten my life.

This I will confess to you, *sub rosa*, that I went yesterday to the cemetery of Père La Chaise and knelt before Rachel's tomb in hope of new courage from mere contact with all there is left of so superb a genius, — the sad-colored stones. I left a flower and a sigh, getting little in return besides a vivid impression of the futility of all worldly effort and ambition — not altogether a cheerful thought for a *débutante* on the eve of an appearance before the most intelligently critical audience in the world !

But I must leave you and hunt up some sleep, rest being really the best friend I have at this nervous time. We have heard nothing of Rudolf, so presume he is not to be here. I wanted one of my old friends

in the audience, some one who cares for Lenore, the woman, not for Mademoiselle Eleonora Dean, the singer.

Frieda! Frieda! I need you very much! I must not give down even for a minute — madame would be so displeased. For Margaret and my Koehne family *I will succeed*.

Yours in a tremor,

LENORE.

The day following her first appearance in opera, Eleonora cabled Mrs. Koehne the one word "Success." Had it been a pecuniary possibility one of the family would have crossed for the purpose of sustaining the *débutante* in her hour of trial, but the greatest hardship experienced by the moderately poor is the inability to do for those they love what would give happiness, owing to a lack of means necessary to carry out their desire.

In the course of the week they read accounts, cabled to the newspapers which brought about a family delight only second to that felt at the arrival of Frieda's son, for even these short paragraphs consisted of nothing but eulogies upon the young singer who "gave evidences of vocal ability equalling if not surpassing the only

Patti," according to one glowing, superlative report. Though none confessed it to another, this triumph exceeded their expectations. Not having seen Eleonora in four years, naturally they still judged her by the earlier standard of her abilities, even when making due allowance for the laborious years intervening since those days. In good time came a letter, written shortly after her cable was despatched, saying:

DEAR ONES, — As is inevitable with me, when deeply moved by events, I am almost deprived of the power of expression. How shall I tell you of that wonderful night! I feel as I used to when seeing an actor scale the prison wall in the play of Monte Cristo and throw out his arms with the cry, "The world is mine!" With all due humility I can say my success was greater than I had ever hoped for. Imagine, if you can, the difficult Parisians jumping from their seats with cries of Bravo! Vive La Dean! Vive la Juliette parfait!

After the second act, I was perfectly weak from excitement; but when I went on again, the elixir of success had made of me a woman I failed myself to recognize. I was not myself—I was Juliette, with but one thought, my love for Romeo. For hours

afterward, all through the congratulations of madame and her friends, I seemed to be the ill-fated heroine. Finally when alone with myself in my narrow bed in our shabby apartments, I said to myself over and over again, "Wake up, Lenore, wake up! you are dreaming all this triumph! It was not you who roused that audience to such a frenzy! In the morning, you will find it all a dream, and the goal still far ahead!" I hardly began to realize what it all really meant to me, until I signed with the managers for the rest of the season.

Think, Frieda! I can now have good clothes all of the time! I have always wondered what it would be like to buy the things one wishes, not alone the things one needs. We will have pretty, bright rooms with good pictures and books about us, things I have longed for all of my life. And I shall be making the money! I! your old Lenore of the red top-knot.

Frieda! Frieda! I am almost beside myself with joy! Why should I succeed and others fail? It must be Fate, after all. But I must stop writing and rest. This eternal resting and petting oneself is the greatest bore in a singer's life. I don't mind being made a baby of, but babying myself is extremely tiresome.

Your overflowing

LENORE.

CHAPTER XII

DURING that season and the following Made-moiselle Eleonora Dean continued to hold her sway over the artistic feelings of the Parisians. Did her nature change with much adulation, excess of flattery, and luxurious living? Of necessity. The fruit indigenous to a cold climate transplanted and artificially encouraged in its growth in the region of the equator, is bound to take on a new appearance and flavor, although still belonging to the original species. The consciousness of power followed by the rapid growth of ego need not dwarf the artist, nor supplant inherent qualities of unselfishness and refinement when a nature is well balanced in the beginning. Still, at the end of the second year of operatic success, Eleonora could hardly have been recognized as the woman who left Boston at the lowest ebb of fortune a few years previous. She had gained flesh, a commanding bearing, and a certain inde-

finable air belonging to the denizens of cosmopolis. She felt herself, so to speak. These changes had only increased her fascinations. Margaret took the keenest delight in the flowers, billet-doux, and jewels, sent frequently by anonymous admirers, but more often signed, no matter how superlative or ridiculous might be the sentiment expressed. At first these incidents of a great singer's life aroused a woman's natural curiosity and vanity; but by the end of the second season Margaret alone received pleasure from this form of attention addressed to the prima donna. Her sister had grown somewhat apart from her, until the young girl viewed the singer almost through the eyes of the world. The penalty of greatness is human isolation. Margaret was jealous even of Eleonora's maid, for when not in bed, at the opera, or going into society, where she was much courted, Eleonora was usually in the hands of her maid, preparatory to one thing or the other.

When Margaret heard that they were going to London for the spring season of opera, she could scarcely contain her joy, saying to Eleonora, "Nolie! Nolie! what fun! we will see dear London and the Dorseys again. London is my

natural home ; besides, my great sister, perhaps you will deign to spend some time with me over there."

"Come here, Madge," replied Eleonora. "Sit on my knee, as you used to do, and we'll pretend we are up in the old garret again, poor, ambitious, and still contented. Do you think, little sister, I am happy in seeing so little of you? *Mon Dieu !* I am a slave, as you know ! Besides, I live on excitement ! The poison of public life is working in my veins. But I remember a little spot in Surrey, where everything is green and quiet. I promise you we will go there after the London season, just you and I all alone, and have a little visit together. You must be lonely, child, many times, and I have been too eaten up with self to have thought of it. Would you not like a profession of your own, little maid ? We have talked of journalism to begin on, and afterwards a great book, a novel to stir up the prosy old world ! Is that not so ?"

"Yes, Nolie, that is my ambition, but my stuff seems too weak and poor to publish."

"Ah, ah, my child, that is the true sign of the artist, they say. We shall see — we shall see.

When we go to London I will turn interviewer myself and make some editor tell me how to proceed with you, unless your heart is going out to that American lad I saw dangling after you at the consulate dinner last week. How is it, Madgie?" and Eleonora turned the serious young face towards her questioningly. But Margaret bore the scrutiny bravely, replying, "What, young Seymour? No, indeed — it would take more of a man than that to marry me!"

"Highty, tighty! marry! *you* marry! why, my baby! you 'll make me out a grandmother," and Eleonora threw back her head with the old contagious laugh. "I said nothing of marriage. I only mean a try at the game of hearts. Cupid is more fun than a café chantant."

Margaret laid her head against Eleonora's, and said, "Nolie, you don't mean that sort of talk; you are in a bad mood. Is it another offer of marriage bothering you? You would not have said that even two years ago."

"You dear preacher *petite*! Are you trying to reform your old sister? One must have diversion when one works as hard as I do. Disease of the heart never killed any man."

"Nolie, why are you so bitter? Have you no faith in men? Were you never in love?"

Leaning back with her head rested against the chair, Lenore closed her eyes and was silent.

Margaret continued, "Do you never expect to marry? Will you be contented always with your art? What if I should marry myself some day, and leave you alone? Don't you long sometimes for a home and some man to love as well as to be loved by?"

Lenore's eyes now looked off as into both past and future, as she replied in a changed voice: "Why do you ask me that to-night, little one, when the blue devils have got hold of me? You are right — sometimes I am weak enough to feel a strange desolation in my life that even you, art, and success cannot satisfy. One tires of *being* loved after a while, and longs for the capacity *to love*."

"May I repeat my question, my sister? Is there no man in the many in your life whom you care for?"

"No, not one." They remained silent for a moment, then Lenore went on: "Long ago in my romantic days I thought I had found my

prince, but of what common clay he was made from my present point of view! Now there is just a mirror where my heart ought to be, reflecting the passions of other people, leaving me desolate. What! Desolate, did I say? What nonsense!" rising suddenly from her chair, — "Bah! Lachrymose sentimentality from the famous prima donna! Have I not everything? What woman could want more? My Art—my wonderful Art fills my entire life. Go, you romantic little goose, to your own life lessons and your lovers, for both are bound to come to a girl with those eyes. What a candidate for domesticity I should be! Come in!" she called, as a knock came at the door. "Ah, Josephine," as the maid presented a card, "Comte de Mensiaux! Say I am engaged, dead, gone to the opera, anything! — I am in no mood for fortune-hunting fossils," she continued to Margaret after the maid went out. "Would you like this noble gentleman as a brother-in-law, *ma chère sœur*? His beautiful red nose, his smooth, bald pate, his long pedigree, and inherited morals would be fascinating to have in the family. I am getting old, you see — twenty-eight last June — an age becoming

the wife of a titled *roué* who walks and talks like this," and she imitated the suitor's manner and speech until even serious Margaret was bound to laugh. "Good-night, child," finally said Eleonora, resuming her accustomed dignity. "Go to bed and dream of Nolie doing love in a cottage in a calico gown and kitchen apron, while you are the editor-in-chief of a London daily—or perhaps the wife of one. Is that it? We will look out for him when we get over to London, and with the *dot* you will have from me I am sure they will grow on bushes. That editor I am going to interview is a bachelor."

"I wish you would speak from your heart sometimes, Nolie," said Margaret; "you are growing into a habit of surface talk."

"I tell you I have no heart. Have you not seen letters from various despairing youths whom I have not even beheld, assuring me of that fact? But go on, dear, and send Josephine immediately, for I must dress. You know we have a little artists' supper to-night among those of us off duty."

When Margaret went out Eleonora sat down while waiting, and watched the firelight. After a moment she uttered half aloud, "Can that

child know how unsatisfying my triumphs are becoming to me? It is as she says, we do not need the love from others as much as the power to love others. I wonder if true love is the only inexhaustible factor of life? Riches, triumphs, fame wear out in time (as love does, too, usually) — but one might imagine the kind that would not. Why have I not turned to passion as an amusement, following in the footsteps of my neighbors? Is it my native moral instinct (for I don't think much nowadays), the effect of early training, or a natural dislike of dirt in any form? *Quien Sabe?* Bah! I am a fool to feel discontent! I do not even know what I want — but sometimes I must confess to that aching void so trite and commonplace. Ah, well! As Berthold Ulrich used to say,

“ ‘ La vie est brève,
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve,
Et puis — bon soir; ’ ”

and she sat a beautiful figure in her silken negligée, looking into the fire, with her elbows supported by her knees and a hand holding either cheek.

That night before sleeping her mind reverted

persistently to the talk with Margaret. "Of course the child will marry some day," she thought, "and leave me alone, something I never realized before. All artists of the male sex marry, but with a woman it is different. The husband would demand that she sacrifice her Art for him. Fancy loving a man well enough for that! That sort of thing belongs to 'sweet sixteen'—no! my Art and I will suffice for each other until the end;" and she turned on her side and went to sleep.

CHAPTER XIII

IN June Eleonora transferred her triumphs and her establishment to London. But alas for Margaret's hopes of more of her society! The Parisian mode of life continued until Eleonora herself was compelled to call a halt, for her voice began to show signs of overwork, and rest seemed imperative. As the season ended they prepared to go to Copsham and take lodgings near their friends the Dorseys, with whom Eleonora had been staying in this haven of rest when she had regained her voice on first coming to England. The week before their departure she said one day to Margaret, "*Petite*, did I ever tell you of the Knight of the Greenwood I met in the pine-wood at Copsham? He seemed quite ideal to me in those days; no doubt because I only saw him for five minutes. I will tell you all about it when we lie down together

on that spot where I met him. I can smell the pines now and breathe that beautiful air. Your old sister needs a rest, Madgie. She begins to feel the blood in her veins dry up. But this is whining. Run and get me that letter of introduction to that editor, the friend of the Dorseys, for I am going off on a lark by myself."

"Where are you going, Nolie, — to the theatre?" asked Margaret.

"No, I long for something new! Even the freshness of my latest rôle has worn off. Now you must not tell if I confide in you, *ma petite*. I have decided to go to this editor *incognito*, then present the letter afterwards if my scheme will not work. Tell Josephine I want that shabby old gown I preserve for the sake of old times. I shall pretend I am poor and need work; then I shall produce some of your stuff, and he will perhaps give me an unbiassed opinion, one uninfluenced by the presence of the celebrated singer. I *must* have a new sensation. I'm bored to death!"

"Poor Nolie! You are so restless these days. You used to be happy. I supposed that when you once became famous you would be the happiest mortal on earth."

"Don't you understand, child, that we artists are all Alexanders sighing for more worlds to conquer? But I am off! Welcome the new sensation! Perhaps he will shut the door in my face! No, he will not do that — he is an English gentleman."

It was with almost a girlish tremor that she found herself in the anteroom of the private room of the editor-in-chief of a renowned London daily.

A youth advanced, asking what he could do for her.

"You are not Mr. Brummel, are you?" she asked.

"Unfortunately no, miss," he replied. "Do you wish to see him?"

"Yes, I do, very much," and Eleonora drew but little upon her histrionic ability when the reply savored of timidity. "Will he see me?"

"I do not know, miss. What name?"

"Oh, my name would mean nothing to him. Just tell him a friend of Mr. Dorsey's wishes to speak with him on business."

"How idiotic of me! I forgot to make up a name! But I must avoid giving any if possible, because he might recognize me on the stage some time."

Evidently Mr. Dorsey's name had proved an open sesame, for immediately she was admitted to the presence of the editor, who much to her surprise was not over thirty-five years of age at the most. At one glance she knew him to be a tall man with reddish brown hair but a few shades darker than her own, a moustache to match, and brown near-sighted eyes looking at her from behind eye-glasses. With a rapid, staccato use of English, he said, "Pray be seated, miss. You came from Dorsey? What can I do for you? I think I have met you before?"

"You must be mistaken if this is Mr. Brummel," said Eleonora, deciding immediately that he must have seen her on the stage or perhaps a photograph of her. "I am a poor, insignificant, ambitious writer, whom Mr. Dorsey has befriended. He thought you might be induced to take some interest in my stuff, and perhaps help me along a bit."

"I should indeed be glad to assist any friend of Dorsey's, but you must understand, miss, that I am a slave to the needs of my paper, and no matter how great your literary ability may be, unless your copy meets our demands I can do nothing for you."

"Then perhaps it would be best for me to leave Margaret's article with you, and after you have read it let me know what you think," Eleonora said, in absolute unconsciousness of her slip.

"I beg your pardon, miss. I thought you said you were bringing your own production to me in hope of publication. Who is Margaret?"

"Did I say Margaret?" she exclaimed, unable to keep back her laughter. "What a poor actress I am! Yes, I'll confess it is for my sister I have come, not on my own behalf."

When she laughed, a sudden look of recognition passed over Brummel's face, and looking steadily and quizzically at her he said, "I thought you never appeared to a mortal more than once in his life? Can you still sing the Beethoven theme?"

"What, the Knight of the Green Wood! not really! Why, this is more amusing than I thought it would be!" replied Eleonora.

"Ah! Then I am to understand that you came to be amused?" asked Brummel.

"I came for just what I said I did. Amusement is not to be had for the asking, so one must never throw away good opportunities. But," rising to go, "I must not detain you. Here is

a letter of introduction from Mr. Dorsey, who evidently has known you but recently, for he certainly did not some years ago when I stopped with his wife at Copsham."

He started to open the letter, but Eleonora stopped him with the request, "Do not open that until I am gone. My country knight will be my city knight, I am sure, and do as I request. Then, if you will be kind enough to read my sister's youthful effort, and give me an opinion as to her ability, I shall be grateful. You will understand my request when you read the letter, and if you really care to have a further explanation of this visit *bring* the copy instead of sending it, and I will make things clear."

"I shall have one satisfaction out of the visit at any rate, — that of knowing you have appeared more than the once you insisted upon in my life. I shall do my best for your sister," and he opened the door for her to pass out.

"Thank you," replied Eleonora. "You are kind to me. I fancy we shall meet again."

"There is no doubt of that in my mind," he said. "Good afternoon."

After her departure he stood looking out of the window, ransacking his brain for some clue

to his visitor's behavior, instead of reading the letter he held in his hand. Finally his thoughts came back to it, and, after an editorial glance at the contents, he exclaimed, "The deuce! Eleonora Dean the opera singer! Why did n't I recognize her? It must be the hair that changes her off the stage. Those stage wigs would disguise one's own mother. So-so, mademoiselle! you came for a new sensation! If I had not been dreaming of you in another form all these years, I should hardly fall in with your plans; but now I bid fair to make as great an ass of myself as the rest. Could she have come for advertising purposes? No, there is something back of it all. I'll do myself the honor of finding out. There is something irresistible about that woman!"

What would be called curiosity in a woman, but merely a desire to know in a man, drew Brummel to the opera whenever Miss Dean sang during the week following her visit to his office, and after restraining his inclinations for a fortnight he called at her hotel, Margaret's manuscript in hand.

When his card came up Eleonora was dressed for her afternoon drive, but on catching sight of

the name she laughed a wicked, slightly triumphant laugh, saying quickly to Margaret, "Drive around and pick up Mrs. Dorsey, if you care to. I shall not go this afternoon."

"Is it any one of importance, Nolie? You have refused a dozen people already this afternoon."

"You inquisitive child! Little pitchers have big ears, true enough! *He* thinks he is important, at any rate, and so will you when I tell you it is Beau Brummel, no doubt wearing your article on his back *à la* sandwich man. I could not refuse him, if only on your account. It would be nipping your literary fame in the bud. Next time you shall meet him yourself—"

"Are you already looking forward to 'the next time'? Did you ever have a heart, Nolie?" and young Margaret's serious eyes met her sister's with a reproving look worthy a mother to her naughty child.

"Away with you! I am in no mood for sermons! Ring for Josephine, there's a dear, and don't try to 'teach your grandmother how to hatch chickens,' as Aunt Maria used to say. There you stand while your literary Fate waits below! Make haste!" and she waved Margaret

towards the door with one hand, taking off her hat with the other.

Some time later, in a house gown admirably planned as a contrast to the shabby attire in which she had appeared before him at the office, Eleonora walked in upon Brummel, who stood with his back turned looking down into the street from the window of her private drawing-room. So quietly had she entered the room that, unconscious of her presence, he stared on out into the soft spring sunlight.

"Did Mr. Brummel come to see me, or to feast his eyes on Piccadilly?" Eleonora asked, as she moved towards him.

"Ah, I beg your pardon. Angels are supposed to rustle their wings and women their gowns when they approach. But I confess that nowadays, excepting on an 'at home' day, I am so habituated to waiting for my hostess to make a toilette that I go to sleep or forget her existence in abstract meditation while I wait."

"How unkind! You are not Beau Brummel, after all, are you? You and Time and Tide wait for no woman, *n'est ce pas!* It is woman's vocation to teach patience. But do sit down, and I will forgive you enough to tell you

"I am glad to see you." Settling herself back comfortably in an American rocking-chair she had imported, she went on: "Now scold me all you please for my unsuccessful attempt to deceive you. What did you think when you read the letter?"

"I thought enough things to bring me here to-day at any rate. Will you honor me with an explanation of that visit, or am I to be left to my imagination?"

"Your imagination! What, trust my reputation to an Englishman's imagination! No, no, Monsieur le Editeur, it might play me tricks! Explanations are worse than cold baths; but I will summon my courage and begin." She leaned forward, looking at him with a half childish, half dare-devilish smile on her face enough to upset the equilibrium of John Knox or Calvin, saying meantime, "Evidently the elusive Maiden of the Pines had made an impression on you. What a pity to find her transformed into a woman of the world, a Bohemian, an opera singer, who would give you chills up your conventional English backbone!"

"I admit that you can do that," he replied, "for I had nearly an emotional ague the other

night when I heard your Juliette for the first time. But my wood nymph is not transformed. You mistake. Neither you nor your Juliette can drive her from me. She belongs to me, you have no part in her."

"Why, have I changed beyond recognition?" asked Eleonora in some surprise. "You mean that I show my years since that time?"

"Even an Englishman would not make so base an insinuation," he replied. "I mean that at a glance one knows you now as a denizen of the world, worldly; before, you were looking forward, the future held so much that was good for you; to-day the past begins to assume proportions, and you wonder if after all it was worth the struggle and pain. Success is a hardening process, and this effect cannot be disguised. Am I not right?"

Eleonora was watching him curiously, as he analyzed her quite as he would a political situation. "Perhaps you are, but when did you find the time to reason that all out? and do you think it makes me any happier to have it put into words?" Her face and tone changed, expressing a latent bitterness which did not escape Brummel.

"Forgive me, Miss Dean, if I touched a sore spot," he said gently, "I am both thoughtless and rude to discuss personalities thus early in an acquaintance."

"No, no, I brought it on myself; and besides you are right. But why am I not happy and contented with the fame I have struggled so long for? Can you tell me? I cannot explain myself to myself."

"Perhaps some day, if you permit me to continue our acquaintance, I will tell you what I think is the trouble. But not now, when I have not even the right of a friend."

"But you are my friend!" Eleonora exclaimed. "True friendship is not gauged by years, or months, or even days, it is the medium of expression between souls that supplement each other. I need a friend, some one who will speak the truth fearlessly to the woman, regardless of the singer's caprices. But," suddenly relapsing into the artificial tone grown habitual, "I must have a fever coming on. I begin to soar! You reduce me to imbecility, Beau Brummel!" and she made a weak attempt at laughter.

"On the contrary, I should say you had

recovered from the world-sickness for a moment, Miss Dean. Let me be your friend if you will. But I brought back your sister's copy, which we must discuss before I leave. I fancy she is very young still, but mentally precocious. She evidently is forming her style upon that of Thackeray and his day. Warn her from me to be more eclectic, study all but copy none, then if she has anything worth saying she will find an audience. I should be glad to talk with her and help her in any way possible."

Eleonora held out one hand to him, saying, in a more subdued gentle way than any one had heard from her since the early days in Boston, "You are so good, Mr. Brummel, and I have not even told you the impetus of that visit to your den. Shall I now?"

Then she explained to him her mixed motives, and they chatted on for half an hour or more.

When he finally rose to go, Eleonora said: "This is but a beginning, I trust? You have done me good. I have forgotten myself. I shall sing to-morrow night more as I did in Paris my *début* winter, for I feel refreshed. Come and see me do Elsa to-morrow night. I am just

the weak and doubting woman to do that role, you know."

"Nothing can shake my faith in the Maiden of the Pines," he replied.

"But I thought you found no trace of her in me!"

"That was where I made my mistake," he replied, and said good by.

CHAPTER XIV

THUS began a friendship which changed the current of the singer's life. During the years of operatic success, her reading and her thoughts centred themselves along the line of her work. The questions so earnestly discussed with Frieda Koehne in her student days had been left behind as she narrowed her mental workings down to hard labor in the fields of drama and music. Not that her mind was dwarfed, — no, I mean that certain tracks of thought remained untrodden. Brummel being a thinking man, he soon opened up the old roads which they traversed together, greatly to the restoration of her equanimity of spirit. Eleonora's range of literary vision had narrowed; the affliction called "The One Idea" was becoming chronic with her, and when she was drawn by this new friendship into wider channels of thought, her brain experienced the same exhilaration the body

does during the first day passed in mountain air after a long residence in the valley, no matter how fertile and sunny the valley may have been. She called their growing friendship a Friendly Alliance of the Great Powers, —the Stage and the Press. She said to herself and to him how glad she was to prove the possibility of real friendship between a man and woman. They met constantly at "Afternoons" and Musicales, where twice she sang during the three weeks remaining to the season. Though not a man immersed in social life, Brummel responded readily to the demands of that sort made upon him, when they were of an interesting nature, especially now that each invitation meant the possibility of a meeting with his Platonic friend. Of course society could not long restrain its interest in their relation, but the season being so nearly over, that dear old Mother Evil could not show the entire length of her tongue, for there was really not time. Eleonora confined her reception of general visitors to one afternoon; the others were given to her friend, when he could get away from his desk. They read together and talked together, Eleonora assuming unconsciously a humble attitude

towards his leading mind most unusual to her, therefore salutary to her entire nature, for "humble pie" is not to be despised in the diet of a nature naturally self-assertive and grown masterly by the daily exercise of will power. They agreed that absolute rest could only be obtained in the village of Copsham, among the pine trees where they had first met. Then, too, there were other advantages: for instance, although he would remain tied to the interests of his journal, they could be reasonably neglected long enough for him to make frequent invasions of that same quiet Surrey retreat.

If Love were really blind he would not be such an amusing urchin; but it is those affected spectacles that make one laugh. The more mature the lovers, the larger his goggles become, until suddenly one day he finds he can see better without them.

The friends reconnoitred the neighborhood (they could not exhaust its beauties); they sat beside the lazy, dreamy river Mole, wondering the while how Izaak Walton would have looked sitting on the opposite bank, for he seemed made for the river and the river for him.

What a beautiful out-of-doors Bohemia they lived in those afternoons! She called him "Beau," although his given name was Arthur; "Because," as she insisted, "no other name would go euphoniously with Brummel;" he called her "My Lady," and, while he rested in the content of her presence, his pipe, and the fascinations of an English summer day decked out in sunshine and other perfections, she would read to him and sometimes sing an old-fashioned song, like "Flow gently, sweet Afton," suggestive of the winding stream flowing past. But such simple pleasures are ephemeral. Time is always jealous of happiness.

During September Eleonora was promised to a round of country visiting in France among some Parisian friends who had shown her many kindnesses before she had caught Fame on the wing. Hers was a steadfast nature. She never forgot the friends of her humbler time of life. Margaret would remain with the Dorseys, but even Brummel could not persuade Eleonora from the promised visits. Before leaving her own little place at Copsham, which she had recently bought with a view to these needed hours of rest, Eleonora had for a week a house

full of guests herself, so that the walks and talks with Brummel were greatly interrupted. She had arranged with him for a last stroll along the piny road where they first met.

It was an afternoon late in August, and the bean-feasters were shouting their cries of cockney joy from the tops of several traps drawn up in front of the Bear Inn for the purpose of refreshment, as Eleonora and Brummel walked through the village.

"How dignified a lot of animals together seem compared with those men," she remarked, as they passed by the inn.

"I should say more stolid than dignified. I think a herd of cows would make as much noise were it possible. These men are penned up all the week, and their most natural impulse at a glimpse of freedom is to shout. I know the feeling. I should like to scream and dance now myself."

"Why don't you?" she asked with a laugh. "I should n't mind in the least."

"Wait until we reach the woods, when perhaps I may be strong-minded enough to shake off conventionality."

"A Frenchman would n't wait."

"Exactly, and therein lies the difference. However, I take it that you prefer the Englishman, My Lady."

"Oh, well — perhaps. At least I prefer *one* Englishman."

"Prefer him to what?"

"All Frenchmen, if they constitute a 'what.'"

They walked on in silence until they reached the pine wood, when Brummel asked quickly:

"Do you imagine that you could ever learn to prefer one to all the world beside?"

"Prefer one what?" she replied.

"An Englishman."

She looked up quickly at the new tone in his voice, meeting a glance she wished for, yet dreaded. "That depends upon what you mean by the world," she replied with some reserve.

"I mean the world of song, of art, of triumph! Could one man take the place of all these in your heart?"

"No, I do not think he could."

"Is this final?"

"Certainly! But what has the question to do with you and me? Come, let us be gay! This is our last day together for months perhaps. Entertain me now."

"I am not much at the histrionic art, you know."

"Look at me, Beau," she said, laying a hand on his arm. "You are not going to fail me, are you? Don't say that you are going in for sentiment. I have trusted you, believing that we could be friends."

"Could you not be my friend if you were my wife? No! I take that back," he said quickly. "I would not ask the sacrifice it would mean on your part, even if you loved me. Let it pass. Forget that I am human. But even after three months' study of a part one spontaneous moment has been my undoing. If you loved me, you would understand."

"I do love you as a friend with the very best love a woman can give a man, made up of respect, admiration, and trust, but, my dear Beau, what sort of a wife would I make any man? I love my freedom, I love my work, although I confess that when I first met you both were palling upon me somewhat. You fill the void I was beginning to acknowledge to myself just as we now stand, so why should we change the relation?"

"You do not love me — that is all. Let us

forget I ever made an ass of myself and show your friendship by not permitting my mistake to disturb our former relations. I will send you that volume of Arnold with the essay I mentioned marked, and you must write me what you think of it."

"Of course I shall write to you about that and many other things," Eleonora replied, looking sadly up at him as he leaned against a tree with a hardened face, indicative of an inward struggle that would have overcome a weaker man. "Beau," she went on, "if you only will be reasonable. I am not fit to be your wife in some ways —"

"Stop right there," he said.

"I mean that afterward you would regret not having married a conventional English girl, who would make a pattern wife."

"If you are my friend, you can at least refrain from making light of my feeling."

"You misunderstand me altogether. I think too much of you for that. As you say, I do not love you in the way you wish, and if I did, marriage between us would be a senseless thing because of what I am. If you were the sort of man to wish me to remain on the stage as your

wife it might make a difference, but you are just the other kind. Born and bred in a conventional atmosphere, the most English of Englishmen, you would be wretched."

"You are right. Let us talk about something more *reasonable*,—that squirrel, for instance, who is putting by provisions so busily. We must get back if I catch my train to town."

"I thought you intended waiting over until the last train."

"I did expect to, but I tell you, Eleonora, you ask too much of a man. Give me a little time to myself to get over this, for I confess, strange as it may seem to you, I had a faint hope."

"I cannot let you go away from me looking like that. Give me your hand, and promise to be my friend and acquit me of ever having drawn you on to such a confession, or I shall feel like a criminal." She held out her hand, which he took while she exclaimed, "I love you so much that I almost wish I loved you more."

"I wish you did, My Lady. But say no more, please, for your voice knocks a man all up. Certainly you are not to blame; it is the fault of nature. Friends we will be, no matter what may befall."

They took the homeward path, the short cut through Chesney, walking silently abreast for a few moments before they relapsed into ordinary conversation, with somewhat of an effort, to be sure ; but gradually their mutual spirit of good comradeship asserted itself, and they separated with a surface ease deceptive even to each other.

" I wonder how much I shall miss him," was Eleonora's last thought before falling asleep that night.

Brummel spent the night smoking and working at the office, to which he went directly from Waterloo Station.

In the course of a week Eleonora discovered, to her own surprise, just how much she did miss him. Receiving no word from him, she telegraphed at the end of the week, " Are you ill? — have heard nothing," to which came the reply, " Not ill, very busy — will write."

The letter from him which followed explained that work had been piled upon him until he could find no time to write a letter worth reading, but he hoped to have more freedom in the future. Also that he had been called to the country by the illness of a friend.

"Ah!" thought Eleonora, "man or woman? He does not seem much put out by not having seen me." However, there was after this frequent exchange of letters, each savoring at first of an attempt at literary display so carefully did they avoid personalities, but finally assuming an air of more freedom and gayety.

Eleonora gradually came to the realization that a week passed without a letter from him held no compensations for her in the busy social life she led among her friends. One day she decided that what she missed constantly was her work, all practice even having been given up during this period of rest. Therefore, pleading over-fatigue to her friends she wired Margaret to meet her at a watering place on the coast of France, where together they lived quietly during September, Eleonora outwardly absorbed in the study of a new role and Margaret busy with her pen. Before they left for Paris, where Eleonora was to sing during the winter, Brummel ran over for a Saturday and Sunday. He seemed to take for granted their friendship as of old, and if he still cared for more he never by word or look betrayed the desire. Being a woman, Eleonora was a trifle piqued at his ready acceptance of her

decree ; and she began to hope for another sign of the lover in him, but he gave none. When he was leaving them Eleonora said to him, " Are you quite well, Beau? You look considerably knocked up to me. Why can't you take some rest? "

" I am taking a long rest against my will from my best friend, — my pipe."

" Have you given up smoking? "

" Yes, my heart took to cutting up high-didos a month or so ago, so I swore off from the pipe."

" I don't believe it's smoking. You are worn out. Rest a little for my sake, if not for your own."

" For your sake I would do a great deal, My Lady ; but journalistic slaves must keep on grinding until they have given all their own grist to the mill. I am all right, or would be if the heart did n't prove itself a racer once in a while," and he laughed off his loss of weight and general air of fatigue then, and all during the winter, when Eleonora would in her letters inquire after his health.

That winter proved the most successful of Eleonora's life artistically. The restlessness per-

vading her gained an outlet in the added *abandon* of her acting,—in the dramatic coloring growing more and more perceptible in her voice. She gave up to a great extent her social life, to the dismay and bewilderment of her Parisian acquaintances. Still she was not happy, and wondered why, not yet admitting to herself the necessity in her life that Brummel had become. His letters continued to be brilliant effusions from the brain, most readable from a literary standpoint, but with the heart entirely left out. Through his assistance Margaret had made a fair start for herself by means of short stories and articles published in London magazines and newspapers. He was a friend to both sisters,—in fact an outsider might have imagined a closer intimacy between him and Margaret, when the three were together, than in the other direction.

And so matters stood when, after the Paris season, Eleonora returned to London for three weeks of singing at Covent Garden.

CHAPTER XV.

A RETURN to London nowadays gave Eleonora distinctly the feeling of going home. She assured Margaret that its soot even was dear to her. This year they took a furnished house on a quiet street adjacent to Park Lane, for the purpose, Eleonora insisted, of furthering Margaret's domestic education, hitherto sadly neglected. They found Brummel somewhat freshened up in appearance, and he declared he was never better. He easily resumed his old habit of dropping in nearly every day for tea, and they met frequently at the houses of their mutual friends. Margaret did her best to persuade Eleonora to social moderation, but the feverish restlessness consuming her bore her along on a tide of dissipation rarely indulged in by a singer while at work. She believed that Brummel had entirely forgotten or outlived the feeling which she now wished to establish in his heart. But he gave no sign of other than a brotherly affec-

tion for both sisters, until one night at a musicale given by Lady Bromley, at which Eleonora was permitted by her manager to sing.

Lady Bromley being a devotee "to under-tones and half-lights," the guests found variety in trying to discover each other's identity, as the lights were subdued to the extent of dimness, except about the piano, thus producing a charmingly theatrical effect — in the eyes of the hostess.

Brummel came in late and alone. He established himself in a remote corner to wait for Eleonora's songs, for as he reflected he felt "too infernally grumpy" to speak to people any more than was necessary.

Some people that he knew were directly in front of him, but he remained unnoticed.

Said one woman's voice, "Where is our friend Brummel to-night? The affairs of the nation must be going badly to keep him away when the fair Dean is to sing."

"No need for him to come here to see or hear her. Did you not know that his street number is changed to 31 —"

"Come now, Mrs. Dacre, draw the line there," interposed a man's voice. "I don't believe it's gone that far."

"Trust a man to plead the cause of *sa belle Eleonora*," laughed Number One.

"Give the woman fair play," said another man. "They say she is to give up the stage and marry a Frenchman of station."

"What difference would that make?" replied the woman with another laugh.

Brummel could stand no more. For a moment he was white and motionless, then, hurrying towards Lady Bromley, he asked in an unnatural voice, "Has Miss Dean arrived?"

"Yes, I think she is waiting her turn in my den across the hall."

"I must see her. May I send and ask her for a word?—it is important."

"Yes indeed, Mr. Brummel. Make yourself quite at home," said his hostess, with a smile of sympathetic understanding more than ever aggravating to him.

As Eleonora sat leaning back in a low chair with her eyes closed, resting preparatory to singing, a maid astonished her with a message from Brummel begging a word.

He came in closing the door behind him, and, without a word of welcome, walked up to the singer as she stood, clad in a wonderful gown of

white and gold, her clear skin belying her years. Taking both of her hands in his, he asked quickly, "Will you do something for me, My Lady?"

"Certainly, Beau."

"Then do not sing for these people. I cannot let you."

"What do you mean? I do not understand!"

Fairly clenching his teeth, he muttered, "The Jezebels! If they were men, I'd shoot the whole lot!"

Eleonora gave a little gasp as she comprehended. She raised one hand to his shoulder, saying rather piteously, "Thank you, Beau. Have you never heard things before? I am used to them now. At first they hurt, because I've tried so hard to keep my record clean. But a woman who stands alone before the world is helpless, especially where the tongues of conventional society women are concerned."

"But I won't have it!" he exclaimed.

"How are you to prevent it? If I should decline to sing now, after you have been with me, it would only make matters worse."

He dropped her hands and walked away, say-

ing almost beneath his breath, "If you could have loved me! If you could only love me now!"

But she heard his words. Hurrying after him she caught him by the arm, saying quickly, "Do you love me still, Beau?"

"Need you ask that, Eleonora?" he replied, with the look in his eyes she had seen once before.

"Then come to my house to-morrow night at nine. I must talk to you alone. I have an offer for an American engagement from New York. Come, and we will decide about it."

"*We* will! Have I any right in the matter, My Lady?"

"Come and find out!" she called over her shoulder, with the smile that always started his heart-beats into a canter. The summons had come for her to sing, and she left him there to collect his scattered air of conventional indifference.

Before the firelight Eleonora sat the next night waiting for the summons to see Brummel in the drawing-room. Margaret was dining out, and Eleonora was experiencing the luxury of being alone with the thoughts that gave her that new,

beautifying expression, as she arranged in her own mind what she would say to Brummel, and then imagined his replies.

"If he only knew how I have been singing my love for a year past. But I did not know — how could he? 'T is a strange feeling — this love — different in every way from anything I have felt before! My feeling for Berthold Ulrich, — ah! how physical it was! First of all I love Beau's mind, — his great thinking powers, his turning of sentences, his fluent pen. Then I love his exalted standard of Right — there is not a petty thing about him, and his manliness — oh, Beau! you have so many people in you to love! But all of these I loved before, now there is something else I can't analyze, nor do I know when it came. Your unconscious goodness makes me a better woman, my sweetheart. I love his eyes with that serious, interrogative look, and his broad, strong chest and shoulders. How silly I am! Worse than a girl of seventeen! What will you say, Beau dear, when I tell you I am ready to give up my art — anything, everything, and marry you? You will look like a Chevalier Bayard and say 'My Lady, my love, is it true? But I cannot accept the

sacrifice.' And I will put both arms around your neck and say, 'What, refuse a lady who offers herself in marriage to you!' And then he will take me in his arms — what strong arms he has, like the whole world encircling one! — though still doubtfully, and then I will —"

The door was thrown open by a maid, who breathlessly, with her eyes nearly starting from her head, jerked out, "It be awful, miss! They're bringin' 'im in, miss, and the coachy 'e be all of a muck! What 'll we do?"

"What does this mean, Hetty?"

"Mr. Brummel, miss. A 'ansom drove up, cabby 'e gets down, no fare gets out. Cabby 'e speaks up to 'im, but there aint no answer. Cabby 'e takes a look inside, there's the fare swooned, dead, somethin'!"

"Be careful, girl — what are you saying?"

"Hope to die if it aint what I says, Miss Dean."

Eleonora rushed past the terrified girl and down the stairs. In the drawing-room, on a couch, the cabman and her butler had laid Brummel, who rested as peacefully as though in sleep. Eleonora pushed the men aside, knelt down beside the couch and tried to waken him.

"Beau, I am here, dear. It is Eleonora! Are you ill?" Getting no response, she turned on the men with "Why do you stand there without doing anything? Don't you see he has fainted? Why don't you go for a doctor?"

"Bently has gone, miss," replied the butler; "'e 'll be 'ere in a minute."

"'E ben't swooned, miss," vouchsafed the cabman. "'E be dead."

"How dare you say so?" cried Eleonora. "Give him brandy! Give him something to revive him! Beau! Beau! wake up! wake up!"

Then the doctor came, and she sprang to meet him, with "Hurry, doctor! My friend has fainted! He has no pulse! What shall we send for?"

After making the examination, while she stood beside him growing whiter, and with eyes straining at his silence, the surgeon said, "Is he your husband?"

"No, no," she cried in agony. "Can't you give him something?"

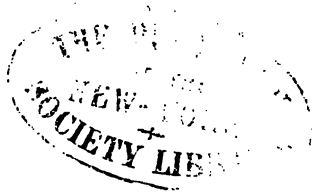
"Nothing will bring him back. He is dead. Must have died of heart failure alone in the cab from what the man says who brought me," the surgeon replied.

Eleonora tottered to the side of the dead man with an awful cry of "Beau, I have killed you! I have killed you!" Claspings the dead body in her arms she laid her head upon the silent heart. "Dead! dead! without knowing that I loved you! Beau, I love you! Can you hear me say it?—I will give up all for you, dearest, if you will come back. I will be your wife, dear. Come back! come back!" She kissed his lips and eyes and brow, not shedding a tear, but moaning like a little child in pain. Unavailingly, the surgeon tried to separate her from the body. "Do not touch me," she cried. "He belongs to me! Everything I love is taken away from me! Doctor! doctor! I will give you all I possess if you will bring him back! I am rich, doctor! I am Eleonora Dean, the opera singer! He was to have been my husband! Then *I* will bring him back! He always said my voice would bring him back from the dead. Beau, sweetheart, dearest, My Lady calls you! My God! he *will* not come!"—and she fell unconscious across the peaceful, unresponsive face of the man she loved too late.

And when, after months of absence from public life, Eleonora returned to the stage as

her one pathway towards oblivion, the universal comment from musical critics was that the dramatic quality and tears in her voice seemed to develop with her added years.

That sound in her voice and the look in her eyes ought to have told the story.



THE END.



